



MR BRUFF.COM

GCSE REVISION GUIDE:

ENGLISH

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

I have written this free revision guide to accompany the AQA GCSEs in English, English Language and English Literature (although it will be useful to students on any GCSE exam board). For the past year I have been uploading revision videos onto [youtube.com/mrbruff](https://www.youtube.com/mrbruff) and these videos have been extremely well received. At the time of writing, my videos have been viewed nearly half a million times across more than 170 different countries. However, I still feel there is need for a revision book to compliment the videos, and that is what you are now reading. Rather than have you spend a small fortune on revision guides for each course, I am providing this all-encompassing guide free of charge.

This eBook has been, and will continue to be, a real labour of love. My plan is to keep updating it with more and more information – it will grow as the bank of videos on YouTube grows. Because of this, I recommend you come back every few weeks and download the latest version (the final eBook will be around 150 pages in length, so if your copy is shorter than that then you will need to update in a few weeks). If you are reading on a PC, iPad, iPhone etc. then you will be able to click the links in each section which will take you to the YouTube video upon which the notes are based.

I am not endorsed by the AQA and I do not have any permissions to reproduce copyrighted materials. Because of this, there are gaps in what I can and cannot do: I do not have pictures in this guide, and I am not able to produce notes on any of the recent poems which are copyrighted. What I am able to do is what you find within this eBook. Having said that, if any wealthy readers are feeling generous and want to help out financially, I am sure I can buy the permissions for the copyrighted texts – just hit the contact tab at mrbruff.com!

I believe that this guide will be more detailed than any other on the market. Take, for example, the section on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'Sonnet 43', where the notes take up eight pages of the book. The detail I go into should give you more than enough to hit the A* grade in your exams; there are no other guides out there that give you that much detail. However, I have also completed this book without an editor, writing solely in my spare time, so please be gracious if you detect any errors!

My goal is to achieve 10,000 downloads in 2013. Please help me to achieve that by spreading the word and getting your friends to download their free copy from www.mrbruff.com.

Andrew Bruff

*NOTE TO SCHOOLS: This revision guide is for download from mrbruff.com only. If you wish to print numerous copies or house the guide on your own servers please contact me through the 'contact' tab at mrbruff.com.

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English / English Language

Unit 1 Exam

Foundation Tier

Section A

AQA English / English Language Exam (Foundation Tier) Section A

The first thing you should know is that the AQA exams for English and English Language follow the same format. Therefore, everything that I write about one is also directly relevant and applicable to the other. The second thing you should be aware of is that the foundation tier exam is very different to the higher tier exam **for section A**. Because of this, you need to know which tier you are doing and only study the guide on that tier. For section B, both papers are very similar, so I will deal with that section in one unified chapter.

THE PAPER:

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/VkejqlOykX4>

This exam is a long one: 2 hours 15 minutes. The exam is marked out of a total of 80 marks, with 40 available for section A and 40 available for section B. In section B, around 1/3 of the marks available are rewarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. In section A, there are no marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar as it is testing your reading skills.

For section A you are required to read three source texts – usually a newspaper article, advert, webpage etc. It is recommended that you spend 15 minutes reading those sources before moving onto the questions.

QUESTION 1A:

Based on the video: http://youtu.be/3vJ_gz9bQDI

Question 1A is a simple question which gives you a great opportunity to pick up 4 marks very easily. It's the exam board's easy opener, where you can get into the swing of things. Having said that, there are a great many students who fail to achieve the full 4 marks, so read on for my tips.

This question is based on source 1. You will be asked to list 4 things you learn from the source.

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 1A

- List four **different** things (make sure none of your points are repeating previous points)
- Make sure the four things you list are focused on the topic from the question. You cannot list just any four things – they need to be linked to the topic of the question

You should spend around
6 minutes
on question 1A

- Write in your own words (do not quote from the text)
- Do not back your answer up with quotations – it is not necessary and will waste valuable time.

QUESTION 1B:

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/5CkHgTiKsXg>

Question 1B is also based on source 1 and is worth 4 marks.

In this question you are being asked to show you understand source 1 by explaining one specific part of it.

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 1B

You should spend around

6 minutes

on question 1B

- Make 2 or 3 separate points in your own words (don't just copy phrases from the text)
- Back up your points with a quotation from the text
- Explain how your chosen quotation proves your point
- Structure your answer in PEE paragraphs.

QUESTION 2:

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/JSYPkcLaMN8>

Question 2 is based on source 2 and is worth 8 marks. It is a comprehension question, asking you to prove that you understand the source. Nationally it is a question which students often struggle with.

You are being asked to show that you understand the source and can point out the main things you learn from it. You will need to back your answer up with short quotations from the text. It is testing your skills of inference – you need to show how you came to your conclusions about the text.

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 2

- Make at least four separate points, written in your own words

You should spend around

12 minutes

on question 2

- Back up each point with a quotation from the text
- Explain how your chosen quotation proves your point
- Structure your answer in PEE paragraphs
- It is NOT a language analysis question – you do not need to Analyse DAFOREST or other language devices in this question.

QUESTION 3

Based on the video: http://youtu.be/c-NI_9W4rS4

Question 3 is based on source 3. It will ask you to explain how the writer uses language techniques to engage the reader. The question will be divided into two sections, with each section focussing on a different element of the text.

This question is worth a hefty 12 marks, so you should spend around 18 minutes answering it.

A lot of students struggle with this question, particularly with the idea of analysing 'language' which seems like such a vague term. The AQA have stated in their examiners' reports that many students struggle with this question because they do not have a tool-kit to analyse language. Well, I have got a toolkit for you, and it's called DAFOREST. Here it is:

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Direct address	Referring to the reader directly using the pronouns 'we' or 'you'.	'You need to give up smoking'
Alliteration	A group of words beginning with the same letter or sound.	'Smoking sucks'
Fact	Something which can be proven to be true.	'60% of teens have tried smoking'
Opinion	A belief which cannot be proven to be true.	'Everyone hates people who smoke'
Rhetorical question	Any question in a piece of writing which does not require an answer.	'Do you want to die young?'
Emotive language	Words which elicit a powerful emotional response.	'Smoking is barbaric and torturous'
Statistics	Numerical facts and data.	'8/10 smokers want to quit'
(rule of) three	Lists of three things in a sentence.	'smoking is expensive, harmful and anti-social'.

There is no quick way around this other than to say you will need to memorise DAFOREST and be able to spot it in source 3. The great thing about it is that the effect it has on the reader is always the same, so if you can memorise it now you pretty much have your answer ready for question three. Here is another table explaining the effect of each technique:

TECHNIQUE	EFFECT ON THE READER
Direct address	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is specifically for them.
Alliteration	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader’s head.
Fact	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
Opinion	Sways the reader towards the writer’s viewpoint.
Rhetorical question	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is relevant to them.
Emotive language	Makes the topic of the text seem overly good or bad, depending on the purpose of the text.
Statistics	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
(rule of) three	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader’s head.

If you can memorise the details in the table above, then answering question three becomes simple:

- Read source 3, highlighting the DAFOREST techniques as you find them. You may not find them all, but there should always be at least five of them.
- Turn each one into a separate PEE paragraph, using the formulaic answers from the table above. For example:

You should spend around
18 minutes
 on question 3

‘The writer of the anti-smoking leaflet uses direct address in the article, asking ‘do you want to die young?’ The use of ‘you’ grabs the reader’s attention and makes them feel the article is written just for them. It makes them want to read on.

The use of emotive language persuades the reader to want to give up smoking. Words such as 'barbaric' and 'torturous' make smoking seem so bad that they are persuaded to see their habit in an extremely negative light. The writer does this to make them want to quit'.

- As this question is worth 12 marks, you should aim to write approximately five good paragraphs, each about a different DAFOREST technique. Remember: the effects on the reader are always the same as that listed in my table, so you should memorise them before the exam.
-

QUESTION 4

Based on the video: http://youtu.be/x0z9Vy_bPk

This means everything except words, so you should be thinking about images, fonts, pictures, photos etc.

Question 4 will ask you to explain how the writer uses **presentational devices** to engage the reader. The challenging part here is that you will need to **compare** how two of the sources use presentational devices.

This question is worth 12 marks, so again the exam board are expecting a detailed response. You are required to pick out a number of presentational devices and comment on the effect on the reader.

The best way to approach this question is to imagine that the sources began as blank white pieces of paper. Every single colour, image and font was therefore chosen with purpose, and the placement of these elements was also a deliberate choice. That means you will have plenty to choose from.

Because of copyright, I cannot reprint any texts here. However, imagine the front cover of a weekly women's magazine. The colour pink is used across the text, and the main image on the cover is of an attractive woman with blonde hair; she isn't a celebrity or a glamour model, but a homely and nice looking woman. Why might these colours and images have been used in this source? Well, you'll need to explain your thinking in PEE paragraphs something like this:

'In source three the colour pink is used throughout the text in both the title, headings and banner. The colour pink is a signifier which has a connotation of femininity. The colour is

used to make the audience realise that the magazine is primarily pitched at a female target audience.

The main photo on the magazine front cover is of an attractive woman. This woman adheres to the stereotypical image of female beauty: blonde hair, blue eyes and straight teeth. The image is used to appeal to female readers in the same age range as the model; she acts as a role model to readers who aspire to be like her. The connotation is that the magazine contains information on how to be like this woman.'

As you can see, my answer clearly focuses on the purpose of the text – in this case the magazine front cover is trying to attract women to buy the magazine. From there I explain how the colours and images are attempting to do this. Never write about different elements in the same paragraph – keep them for a separate paragraph.

Because this is a comparison question, you will also need to consider how the two texts are similar and different. Imagine the second source is the front cover of a skateboarding magazine. A comparative paragraph may read:

'In stark contrast to source three, source one does not use the colour pink at all. Instead, the background colours are a mix of blue and black. This is because the source has a different target audience: young males. Blue is a colour which has a stereotypical association with males and would therefore draw them to the magazine. The connotation of black is that it suggests danger and even evil, symbolising the 'bad' connotations often associated with skateboarding. Although the magazines use different colour schemes, they are united in the fact that the colours they use are chosen to appeal to their differing target audiences.'

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 4

- Think only about colours, images, font size and placement on the page (do not write about language)
- Write PEE paragraphs which address target audience and effect on the reader
- Remember to compare –comment on the similarities and differences between the two texts.

You should spend around

18 minutes

on question 4

And that brings us to the end of section A. Everything you need to know about section B is the same for the higher tier paper too, so please now turn to page 19.

English / English Language

Unit 1 Exam

Higher Tier

Section A

AQA English / English Language Exam (Higher Tier) Section A

As I have already stated in the foundation tier section of this eBook, you should know that the AQA exams for English and English Language follow the same format. Therefore, everything that I write about one is also directly relevant and applicable to the other. The second thing you should be aware of is that the foundation tier exam is very different to the higher tier exam **for section A**. Because of this, you need to know which tier you are doing and only study the guide on that tier. For section B, both papers are very similar, so I will deal with that section in one unified chapter.

The PAPER:

This exam is a long one: 2 hours 15 minutes. Your paper is marked out of a total of 80 marks, with 40 available for section A and 40 available for section B. In section B, around 1/3 of the marks available are rewarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. In section A, there are no marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar as it is testing your reading skills.

For section A you are required to read three source texts – usually a newspaper article, advert, webpage etc. It is recommended that you spend 15 minutes reading those sources before moving onto the questions. In the higher tier paper all three texts tend to be very dense – no easy posters here!

QUESTION 1:

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/Dx23GNO0JhE>

Question 1 is based on source 1 and is worth 8 marks. You are given 3 pages in the answer booklet, and should aim to fill at least two of these. The question is testing your ability to read and understand a text, backing up your points with quotations. It is a fairly easy opener to the exam paper. You are being asked to summarise the text in your own words, pointing out subtleties or inconsistencies if you can spot them.

Although this is a fairly simple question, there are still a few pitfalls you need to avoid. To begin with, this is not a language analysis question. You should not be picking out DAFOREST techniques and commenting on their effect on the reader. In fact, all you are being asked to do is summarise the text in your own words.

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 1

- Make a range of points which summarise all parts of the text.
- Comment on how the text begins, what it is saying in the middle and how it ends.
- Use your own words – don't just copy out the text.
- Back up your points with appropriate quotations.
- Look for subtleties such as inconsistencies or contradictions.

You should spend around
12 minutes
on question 1

If you would like to see an example of a top band answer to question 1, click this video link:

<http://youtu.be/iyDVAK9QSLU>

QUESTION 2:

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/5XjEaxg-OtU>

This means everything except words, so you should be thinking about images, fonts, pictures, photos etc.

Question 2 will ask you to explain how the writer uses **presentational devices** to engage the reader. This question is worth 8 marks, meaning you should spend around 12 minutes on it. You are expected to analyse the presentational devices mentioned in the question and comment on their effect on the reader. Unlike in the foundation paper, there will be a second part to the question, usually asking how the presentational devices relate to the text itself. For an example of a top tier answer to this question watch this video:

<http://youtu.be/XXNDCOuqZWw>

The best way to approach this question is to imagine that the sources began as blank white pieces of paper. Every single colour, image and font was therefore chosen with purpose, and the placement of these elements was also a deliberate choice. That means you will have plenty to choose from.

Because of copyright, I cannot reprint any texts here. However, imagine the front cover of a weekly women's magazine. The colour pink is used throughout, and the main image on the cover is of an attractive woman with blonde hair; she isn't a celebrity or a glamour model, but a homely and nice looking woman. Why might these colours and images have been used in this source? Well, you'll need to explain your thinking in PEE paragraphs something like this:

'In source two the colour pink is used throughout the text in both the title, headings and banner. The colour pink is a signifier which has a connotation of femininity. The colour is used to make the audience realise that the magazine is primarily pitched at a female target audience.'

The main photo on the magazine front cover is of a beautiful young woman. This woman adheres to the stereotypical image of female beauty: blonde hair, blue eyes and straight teeth. The image is used to appeal to female readers in the same age range as the model; she acts as a role model to readers who aspire to be like her. The connotation is that the magazine contains information on how to be like this woman.'

As you can see, my answer clearly focuses on the purpose of the text – in this case the magazine front cover is trying to attract women to buy the magazine. From there I explain how the colours and images are attempting to do this. Never write about different elements in the same paragraph – keep them for a separate paragraph.

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 2

You should spend around

12 minutes

on question 2

- Make a direct reference to illustrate the device. obviously you can't quote a picture or colour, but you can refer to it like this: 'the colour pink is used for the magazine title'.
- Explain why the writer has used this device.
- Comment on the effect on the reader.

QUESTION 3

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/meKOEJz3HBE>

Question 3 is based on source 3. It is a difficult question in that it appears to be quite vague. It will ask you to explain – to make clear and understandable, something you have read about in the source. The question is, once again, worth 8 marks. It will often, but not always, be based on a non-fiction text such as a journal or autobiography piece.

Like question 2, this question will be testing your ability to understand and interpret meaning, this time in source three. Again, it is not a language analysis question, and language should only be analysed if it specifically answers the question. You should not write about the effect on the reader in this question (that comes in question 4).

As with question 1, you should aim to make a range of points which cover all parts of the text. Comment on how the text begins, what it is saying in the middle and how it ends.

For an exemplar answer to question 3 follow this link: http://youtu.be/JRIF6SmC_2s

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 3:

- Write about all parts of the text – beginning, middle and end
- Back up your points with quotations from the text
- Do not write about the effect on the reader.

You should spend around

12 minutes

on question 3

QUESTION 4

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/sK8SAQGGSwc>

This is the trickiest question in section A, in that it will require you to choose which sources you will write about. You will be asked to compare the language use in two texts – one is set and the other is to be chosen by you. This question is worth 16 marks and requires a very detailed answer.

A lot of students struggle with this question, particularly with the idea of analysing ‘language’ which seems like such a vague term. The AQA have stated in their examiners’ reports that many students struggle with this question because they do not have a tool-kit to analyse language. Well, I have got a toolkit for you, and it’s called DAFOREST. I will happily share it with you but I must make it clear that it is not going to get you an A or A* - it is a good building block to start with, and I include it here for those of you looking for a starting point when it comes to language analysis, but I will give some more sophisticated techniques afterwards.

Here is DAFOREST:

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Direct address	Referring to the reader directly using the pronouns ‘we’ or ‘you’.	‘You need to give up smoking’
Alliteration	A group of words beginning with the same letter or sound.	‘Smoking sucks’
Fact	Something which can be proven to be true.	‘60% of teens have tried smoking’
Opinion	A belief which cannot be proven to be true.	‘Everyone hates people who smoke’
Rhetorical question	Any question in a piece of writing which does not	‘Do you want to die young?’

	require an answer.	
Emotive language	Words which elicit a powerful emotional response.	'Smoking is barbaric and torturous'
Statistics	Numerical facts and data.	'8/10 smokers want to quit'
(rule of) three	Lists of three things in a sentence.	'smoking is expensive, harmful and anti-social'.

There is no quick way around this other than to say you will need to memorise DAFOREST and be able to spot it in the two sources. The great thing about it is that the effect it has on the reader is always the same, so if you can memorise it now you pretty much have your answer ready for question three. Here is another table explaining the effect of each technique:

TECHNIQUE	EFFECT ON THE READER
Direct address	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is relevant to them.
Alliteration	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader's head.
Fact	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
Opinion	Sway the reader towards the writer's viewpoint.
Rhetorical question	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is relevant to them.
Emotive language	Makes the topic of the text seem overly good or bad, depending on the purpose of the text.
Statistics	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
(rule of) three	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader's head.

If you can memorise the details in the table above, then answering question 4 becomes quite simple:

- Read the two sources, highlighting the DAFOREST techniques as you find them. You may not find them all, but there should always be at least five of them.
- Turn each one into a separate PEE paragraph, using the formulaic answers from the table above. For example:

The writer of the anti-smoking leaflet uses direct address in the article, asking 'do you want to die young?' The use of 'you' grabs the reader's attention and makes them feel the article is written just for them. It makes them want to read on.

The use of emotive language persuades the reader to want to give up smoking. Words such as 'barbaric' and 'torturous' make smoking seem so bad that they are persuaded to see their habit in an extremely negative light. The writer does this to make them want to quit'.

BUILDING ON THE BASICS OF DAFOREST

As I have said, DAFOREST is a useful starting point but for those of you aiming to achieve the very top grades you will need to do more than churn out simple PEE paragraphs verbatim. For example, you should also try to consider the structure of a text as seen in this sample answer:

'The writer uses a mix of fact and opinion to persuade the reader to give up smoking. When we read 'each cigarette contains 0.2 grams of asbestos', this fact makes us feel that the article is accurate and to be believed; facts give an air of authority to a text. By following this with the opinion 'smoking is a disgusting habit', we are led to believe that this too is a fact, like the one that went before it. The effect is that we believe the opinion to be fact and are therefore persuaded that smoking is both a dangerous and disgusting habit.'

You should also look for examples of humour, irony, satire, hyperbole and other techniques. For more on these, see this video: http://youtu.be/O_I5bWUA27k When you find these you should follow the same format as stated above: mention the technique, back up your point with a quotation and write about the effect on the reader.

Finally, if you are naturally a top level student you should also be willing to 'go with your gut'. If there is a word or phrase which seems significant to you then you should write about it.

Do not forget that this is a comparison question. Because of this, you will also need to consider how the two texts are similar and different. A comparative paragraph may read:

Source three does not use fact at all, but relies on emotive language to do its bidding. In an attempt to sell the holiday package the text is littered with words such as 'awe inspiring' and breath-taking'. These words are hyperbolic; this is but a simple two star package holiday.

However, the desired effect is that the reader will fall in love with the holiday, rating it far higher than it does in actuality deserve. Whereas source one uses facts to sound authoritative and accurate, source three sees no such need. Perhaps this is because the whole advert is ‘tongue in cheek’, using a wry sense of humour to entertain its reader and ultimately cause them to amiably book the holiday.’

TOP TIPS FOR QUESTION 4:

You should spend around

24 minutes

on question 4

- Choose your second source carefully – the easiest thing to do is choose the one which contains most of the DAFOREST techniques.
- Read both sources, highlighting the DAFOREST techniques as you find them. You may not find them all, but there should always be at least five of them.
- Turn each one into a separate PEE paragraph, using the formulaic answers from the table above.
- Look for more sophisticated points if you are aiming for A and A* grades.
- Remember to compare – write about similarities and differences.

So that concludes section A. Next up I will take a look at section B of the exam. Section B follows the same format whether you are taking foundation or higher tier, so I will combine the two in one mammoth chapter.

English / English Language

Unit 1 Exam

Section B

(Higher & Foundation Tier)

AQA English / English Language Exam Section B (F & H Tier)

Section B follows the same format no matter which tier paper you are taking. Whether you are aiming for a C grade or an A* you should aim to do everything I cover in this chapter in your section B answer.

Section B is the writing section of the exam, requiring you to write two long answers. You are recommended to spend around 25 minutes on question 5 and 35 minutes on question 6.

Around 1/3 of the marks available in this section are awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar, so it is not just about what you write but how you write it.

I shall divide this chapter into 4 parts: purpose, audience, format and technical skills.

PURPOSE:

The section B questions are based on a number of purposes: writing to argue, persuade, inform, explain and describe are the most common ones. However, there is one great set of linguistic devices which applies to all of these: DAFOREST.

Here are some typical questions you might see in section B of the exam:

Write a letter to your head teacher arguing that you should be able to wear what you want to school.

Write an article for your school website which persuades prospective parents to send their children to your school.

Write a letter to your parents in which you persuade them to let you go on holiday with a friend this summer.

Write the text for a speech in which you argue for or against compulsory PE lessons.

All of these questions would suit the DAFOREST linguistic devices.

LINGUISTIC DEVICES: USING DAFOREST

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/jJDwdblifmE>

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	WHY WE USE IT
Direct address	Referring to the reader directly using the pronouns 'we' or 'you'.	'You need to give up smoking'	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is relevant to them.
Alliteration	A group of words beginning with the same letter or sound.	'Smoking sucks'	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader's head.
Fact	Something which can be proven to be true.	'60% of teens have tried smoking'	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
Opinion	A belief which cannot be proven to be true.	'Everyone hates people who smoke'	Sway the reader towards the writer's viewpoint.
Rhetorical question	Any question in a piece of writing which does not require an answer.	'Do you want to die young?'	Engages the reader to read on as they feel that, by being addressed directly, the text is relevant to them.
Emotive language	Words which elicit a powerful emotional response.	'Smoking is barbaric and torturous'	Makes the topic of the text seem overly good or bad, depending on the purpose of the text.
statistics	Numerical facts and data.	'8/10 smokers want to quit'	Make the text seem authoritative, accurate and therefore believable.
(rule of) three	Lists of three things in a sentence.	'smoking is expensive, harmful and anti-social'.	Makes the text catchy – it sticks in the reader's head.

When you use DAFOREST in your writing, it automatically hits the highest bands in the mark scheme for both section B questions. Below is an example of just how you can do that. This article argues that the elderly are to blame for today's problems (it's an old exam question I tried to answer). As you will see, you can use DAFOREST to make up the majority of your

answer. Everything that is highlighted is an example of DAFOREST – can you work out which bit is which technique?

PENSIONERS POLLUTE

As current surveys show 75% of old people hold young people responsible for today's problems, Andrew Bruff suggests today's youth are not the key offenders; the elderly had the planet ruined before they even arrived.

Look around you. What do you see? Do you, like me, see a world that is full to the brim of rubbish, creating pollution by the bucket-load? Do you see wasteful consumerism gone crazy, an insane, insatiable desire to have everything? Now look up from this problem; who are those doing these things? Is it, as a recent survey shows, young people's fault? No way.

In a recent article Michele Hanson argued that her 'make do and mend' generation knew something about how to save the environment. Of course, what she failed to mention was why they were make do and mending in the first place: World War 2. Oh yes, whilst Mrs Hanson was washing her tin-foil, Mr Hanson was being shipped off the Poland, destroying natural landscapes with tanks, clogging up the Polish air with fuel emissions from the machinery of war (not to mention the killing).

I am a young person. I care. I care about the environment, I care about pollution, I care about recycling. Old people don't seem to realise that 80% of members of Greenpeace are under 25: young people care. Old people are to blame – take my granddad for example.

Roger Bruff is 81 years old. He lives alone, but refuses to downsize from the three bedroom house that he brought his family up in. This is common of many of the elderly – you don't need a big house unless you have a family! I visit granddad once a week. I often check his green and brown bins, but the recycling one is always empty. His argument is that he's too weak to be sifting through his rubbish, yet he's not too weak to get to the pub every week. In granddad's driveway is a car – a big beast that guzzles fuel. Like all old people, he's stubborn, and refuses to walk anywhere, but drives. My granddad is not a rare case, he is a typical old person: selfish. His house is always bathed in heat with his radiators kicking out toxic waste 24/7.

What's my point? It isn't young people who are to blame. We are not the homeowners, the car drivers, the consumers. We are not those who fly around the world on holiday. What do we do? We go to school, we see our friends. It is the elderly who do these things – they torture and destroy the world. They crucify nature in their desire for satisfaction. Yes, all young people have mobile phones, but we use them for music, phone calls and internet, not like the wasteful elderly who make a call once a year.

The youth of today are the most educated people in the world; our conscience does not allow us to be wasteful.

PLANNING DAFOREST:

For these long answers you need to spend a few minutes planning before you begin writing. A great idea is to write DAFOREST down the side of your page and actually plan the sentences you will write for each one. It might look something like this:

D: 'You need to give up smoking'
A: 'Smoking sucks'
F: '60% of teens have tried smoking'
O: 'Everyone hates people who smoke'
R: 'Do you want to die young?'
E: 'Smoking is barbaric and torturous'
S: '8/10 smokers want to quit'
T: 'smoking is expensive, harmful and anti-social'.

Everyone plans in different ways, so I won't prescribe any set way of doing it. However, you must make a plan – examiners have to read them, and they give off a great first impression if you've got things like DAFOREST in your plan. If you do not plan your answer, the likelihood is your work will begin strong (with your best ideas) but get weaker and weaker as you write. A well planned answer, on the other hand, can stay strong throughout the entire piece.

AUDIENCE

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/OmsITKpn-Ec>

For questions 5 and 6 you need to think very carefully about your audience. Consider the two very similar tasks:

- 1) Write a letter to your head teacher in which you argue for the abolition of school uniform.**
- 2) Write a letter for the student newsletter in which you argue for the abolition of school uniform.**

The purpose of both of these texts is exactly the same: arguing for the abolition of school uniform. A good answer would be riddled with DAFOREST and all the other topics in this chapter. However, the difference in target audience – the head teacher or fellow students, will make both pieces very different.

The first thing to think of is the tone and level of formality you write in. To the head teacher you would write with a formal and polite tone, whereas there would be room for a more relaxed tone in the student newsletter. You have to consider the person reading the text and how you can best communicate with them to achieve your purpose.

The second thing to be aware of is the art of second guessing. This is an often overlooked area which basically means this:

Anticipate your reader's response and argue against that.

So, when writing to your head-teacher arguing that he / she should abolish school uniform, you would anticipate these responses:

- School uniform encourages good behaviour
- Some students couldn't afford the expense of smart clothes for school
- It's a time honoured tradition

With this as your starting point, you then argue against these ideas e.g.

'I know you will say that school uniform encourages good behaviour, but I disagree. At the moment, students are using their poor behaviour to express their individuality. Allow students to wear what they want to school and their clothing choices will become their expression of self, resulting in better behaviour across the school.'

By pre-emptively striking against your audience's response you are effectively winning the argument before they even have a chance to make their points: it's a very clever technique and the examiners love it!

SATIRE

Based on the video: http://youtu.be/O_15bWUA27k

If you are trying to hit the A / A* grades in your exam then it is important to use satire or humour in your writing. Satire is the use of humour to attack injustice. On TV, the best example is the show 'Have I Got News For You'. In writing, the Irish satirist Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745) wrote some very popular satire. In his essay 'A Modest Proposal' he suggested that poor Irish people should sell their children as food to rich Americans. Of course he wasn't serious, but he laid his essay out in a very formal way. The point was to mock heartless attitudes towards the poor.

Let me show you an example of how you can use satire in your own writing. Imagine the following question:

Write a letter to your fellow school students in which you inform them of the benefits of school uniform .

Now consider the following response:

'The current school uniform gives us a sense of community and belonging. Because we wear the same clothes there is no room for bullying over appearance; we all look the same, so we all treat each other the same.'

This is a very acceptable paragraph, but it fails to jump off the page and grab the reader's attention. The next two examples use humour to engage the reader. See what you think:

'By wearing the shirt, tie and blazer, we are preparing ourselves for the world of work and our future careers. Dressing up for school today shows you how to dress up for McDonalds tomorrow or, maybe for the lucky few of us, even Primark.'

It is a well known fact that imposing a school uniform results in improved behaviour from students. Indeed, since introducing the blazer last year, we have been able to completely dispose of the behaviour system completely. One Year 7 student even told me "wearing a tie makes me want to be a better boy". Other have said that just slipping on school shoes stops them from swearing.'

Indeed, school uniform makes us behave so well, I suggest we start wearing it at home too. The magical effect will mean we never back chat our parents again!'

As you can see, the use of tongue in cheek humour makes the piece far more engaging. If you are naturally a funny person, then attempt to use some of that humour in section B of the exam.

ARTICLE FORMAT

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/M1lteWgRyKA>

If you are asked to write an article of any kind (newspaper, magazine, web-page etc.) then you should use the following format:

Your subheading (first paragraph) should summarise the whole article in a few sentences.

Your headline should be short, snappy and alliterative. It should hint at the topic of the story but not give too much away.

PENSIONERS POLLUTE!

As current surveys show 75% of old people hold young people responsible for today's problems, Andrew Bruff suggests today's youth are not the key offenders; the elderly had the planet ruined before they even arrived.

Look around you. What do you see? Do you, like me, see a world that is full to the brim of rubbish, creating pollution by the bucket-load? Do you see wasteful consumerism gone crazy, an insane, insatiable desire to have everything? Now look up from this problem; who are those doing these things? Is it, as a recent survey shows, young people's fault? No way.

In a recent article Michele Hanson argued that her 'make do and mend' generation knew something about how to save the environment. Of course, what she failed to mention was why they were make do and mending in the first place: World War 2. Oh yes, whilst Mrs Hanson was washing her tin-foil, Mr Hanson was being shipped off the Poland, destroying natural landscapes with tanks, clogging up the Polish air with fuel emissions from the machinery of war (not to mention the killing).

I am a young person. I care. I care about the environment, I care about pollution, I care about recycling. Old people don't seem to realise that 80% of members of Greenpeace are under 25: young people care. Old people are to blame – take my granddad for example.

Richard Bruff is 81 years old. He lives alone, but refuses to downsize from the three bedroom house that he brought his family up in. This is common of many of the elderly – you don't need a big house unless you have a family! I visit granddad once a week. I often check his green and brown bins, but the recycling one is always empty. His argument is that he's too weak to be sifting through his rubbish, yet he's not too weak to get to the pub every week. In granddad's driveway is a car – a big beast that guzzles fuel. Like all old people, he's stubborn, and refuses to walk anywhere, but drives. My granddad is not a rare case, he is a typical old person: selfish. His house is always bathed in heat with his radiators kicking out toxic waste 24/7.

The rest of your article should go into more detail about the topic. It should ideally include quotations from interviews with relevant people (you make these up).

TECHNICAL ACCURACY

1/3 of the marks available for section B are awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Because of this, you need to learn the following technical skills.

CAPITAL LETTERS

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/Zi8HRdmZs0o>

Capital letters may seem like a very easy place to start, but in actual fact there are many uses of a capital and if you make mistakes with these supposedly 'simple' pieces of pieces of punctuation then you will struggle to get a high grade. Despite their hidden complexities, there is little more off-putting and instantly recognisable to an examiner than the incorrect use of a capital letter.

You should use a capital letter for:

- 1) The start of a sentence e.g. 'Today is Monday'.
- 2) Names of people, brands, days of the week and months e.g. 'Andrew, Nike, Monday, January'.
- 3) Countries and cities e.g. 'America, Plymouth'.
- 4) Languages and religions e.g. 'French, Buddhist'.
- 5) Holidays e.g. 'Christmas, Easter'.
- 6) Titles. The first and significant words in a title need a capital e.g. 'The Lord of the Rings'. In this example the words 'of' and 'the' are not significant- they don't hold the meaning, so they are not capitalised.
- 7) The personal pronoun 'I' e.g. 'I love Mr Bruff's revision videos'.
- 8) Abbreviations e.g. 'BBC'.
- 9) Emphasising words: if you wish to show strong emotion such as anger you can put whole words or sentences in capitals e.g. 'I HATE YOU!'

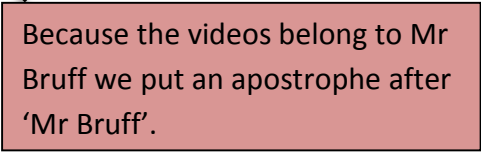
As you can see, capital letters are not as simple as you might have thought. Why not try writing a paragraph which incorporates all nine types?

APOSTROPHES OF POSSESSION (BASIC LEVEL)

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/JYhUzr575q4>

Apostrophes of possession show us who or what owns something in a sentence. For example:

Mr Bruff's videos are an amazing resource.



Because the videos belong to Mr Bruff we put an apostrophe after 'Mr Bruff'.

There is a technique worth learning here, as it makes it all very easy when we get to advanced level apostrophes:

- 1) Ask yourself who the thing belongs to. Whatever the answer is, the apostrophe goes after that. E.g. who do the revision videos belong to? The answer is **Mr Bruff**, so the apostrophe goes after **Mr Bruff**.

If you can understand that simple technique then we can apply it to the advanced level of apostrophes of possession.

APOSTROPHES OF POSSESSION (ADVANCED LEVEL)

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/qQ3TTsXcbpU>

The thing about apostrophes of possession is that they very quickly become very difficult. Consider the following two sentences:

- **The students work was awesome** (when talking about an individual student).
- **The students drama show was a real let down** (when talking about a group of students).

Where would you put the apostrophes in these sentences? Well, if you apply the technique above it's simple:

In the first sentence who does the work belong to? The answer is **the student**, so we put the apostrophe after the word **student**, making the correct answer: the student's work was awesome.

In the second example, who does the drama show belong to? The answer is **the students**, so we put the apostrophe after the word *students*, making the correct answer: the students' drama show was a real let down.

This simple reversing technique should help you to work through the following tricky sentences:

The womens movement was a seminal event in history.

The childrens park was in need of some repair.

The babies hats were so cute.

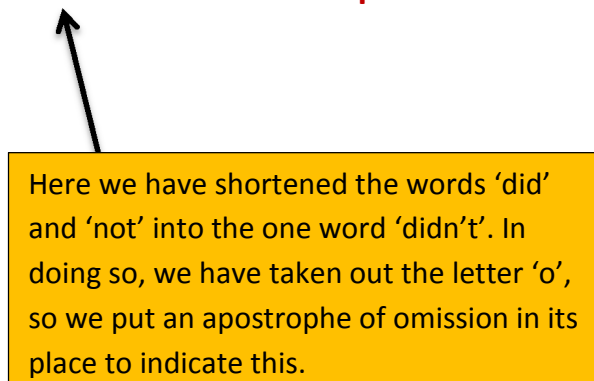
If you find those three difficult be sure to watch the video.

APOSTROPHES OF OMISSION

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/JYhUzr575q4>

These are the simplest type of apostrophe, used to show where letters or words have been taken out. Look at the following example:

I didn't even know that spiders could bite.



Here we have shortened the words 'did' and 'not' into the one word 'didn't'. In doing so, we have taken out the letter 'o', so we put an apostrophe of omission in its place to indicate this.

The only tricky bit with apostrophes of omission is that there are some words which have been shortened for so long that you might not realise it. For example: 8 o clock should be written 8 o'clock, as it was originally shortened from '8 of the clock'.

CONNECTIVES

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/CiQOP570fzI>

Connectives are words which link sentences and paragraphs together. You should aim to use them in your writing to show that there is some cohesion between the different parts of your answer. Without connectives, it will look like you have simply written a bunch of random thoughts.

Here are some of the main connectives you can use. I recommend trying to memorise five or six to use in your written work:

Firstly Secondly Eventually Meanwhile After Next Before
Consequently Because Therefore As a result Likewise Also In the
same way Equally Similarly Although Conversely In contrast
Whereas On the other hand In particular Above all Indeed
Especially Significantly In addition Furthermore What's more
Moreover For example For instance

So how should you use them? Here is a slightly over the top example, but it gives you an idea of how your writing will appear so much more cohesive with the use of connectives.

'Because of a power-cut, my alarm did not sound at the prescribed hour of 7AM. Furthermore, a traffic jam on the A38 delayed me by an extra ten minutes. Consequently, I arrived at the office twenty three minutes later than planned. However, my boss Michael was also late, meaning that I still arrived before him. Nevertheless, I threw myself into my work with reckless abandon, working fiercely to redeem the lost twenty five minutes. As a result, by the time Michael did arrive, I had caught up with the missed work.'

In contrast to this, Kelly arrived at work on time. However, she spent the first forty 'boss free' minutes of the day catching up on Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, when Michael walked in, it was Kelly that was disciplined, not me. Provided that no-one informs the boss of my blunder, I am now in prime position for a job promotion.'

SENTENCE VARIETY


Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/P1RC-d8fJzw>

The following is an absolute must for those students aiming to achieve A and A* grades. So many students fail to vary their sentence structure, and the result is pure boredom for the examiner. If you incorporate the following into your answers for questions 5 and 6, your work will stand out from the rest and impress that examiner.

1) Two adjective beginnings

The aim here is to start your sentence with two adjectives which describe the subject of the sentence. For example:

Informative and entertaining, Mr Bruff's eBook was a worldwide bestseller.



The adjectives 'informative' and 'entertaining' transform this sentence into something much more engaging than 'Mr Bruff's eBook was a worldwide bestseller'. Simple but effective.


Here is another example:

Exhausted and frustrated, the students finally finished their GCSE exams.

2) Starting with an 'ing' word

What you do here is start your sentence with an ing word, leading into a clause which tells us more about the subject of the sentence. For example:

Straining with the effort, Grandma did a back-flip.

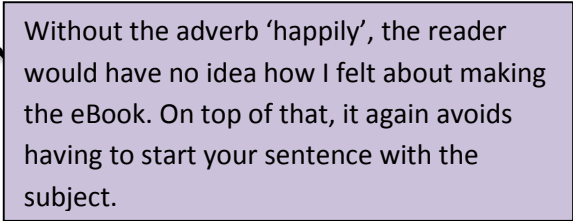


Rather than the simple sentence 'Grandma did a back-flip', the 'ing' clause at the beginning makes the sentence so much more interesting.

3) Beginning with an 'ly' word

For this third example of sentence variety, we begin the sentence with an adverb (an 'ly' word) which gives us more detail on how the verb is performed. For example:

Happily, Mr Bruff wrote a 15,000 word revision guide over the holiday.



Without the adverb 'happily', the reader would have no idea how I felt about making the eBook. On top of that, it again avoids having to start your sentence with the subject.

So what would it look like if you were to use these three types of sentence variety in an exam response? Well, let me take part of the article from earlier in this chapter and edit the structure of some of the sentences.

This is our starting text:

'In a recent article Michele Hanson argued that her 'make do and mend' generation knew something about how to save the environment. Of course, what she failed to mention was why they were make do and mending in the first place: World War 2. Oh yes, whilst Mrs Hanson was washing her tin-foil, Mr Hanson was being shipped off the Poland, destroying natural landscapes with tanks, clogging up the Polish air with fuel emissions from the machinery of war (not to mention the killing).'

Here's the same text with some sentence variety added in:

Disillusioned and despondent, Michele Hanson recently argued that her 'make do and mend' generation knew something about how to save the environment. Curiously, what she failed to mention was why they were make do and mending in the first place: World War 2. Hoping to be economical, Mrs Hanson was washing her tin-foil whilst Mr Hanson was being shipped off the Poland, destroying natural landscapes with tanks, clogging up the Polish air with fuel emissions from the machinery of war (not to mention the killing).

The most notable thing here is that altering the sentence structure does not alter the content of your answer – the content stays the same, but the quality of written communication is dramatically improved.

SEMI-COLONS

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/- Zu60hqudU>

The semi-colon is the undisputed king of punctuation; use it correctly and you are bound to impress the examiner. Surprisingly, it is a very simple to use piece of punctuation. In your answers to questions 5 and 6 you should aim to use one at the beginning and one at the end; you never want to commit semi-colon overkill.

Semi-colons are used to join two sentences, where both sentences are about the same topic.

For example:

Mr Bruff's revision videos are hosted on YouTube; his eBook is hosted on his own site.

In this example there are two separate sentences:

Mr Bruff's revision videos are hosted on YouTube.

His eBook is hosted on his own site.

However, both of the sentences share a common topic – they both focus on the hosting sites of the revision materials created by Mr Bruff. Because of this, a semi-colon can be used.

Here are some examples where a semi-colon should not be used. Can you work out why it is not correct to use a semi-colon?

I like Christmas; because I get lots of presents.

It is Thursday today; my Christmas tree is fake.

In the first example, the clause 'because I get lots of presents' is not a complete sentence (it is a subordinate clause). Remember: semi-colons can only be used to join two complete sentences. A sentence (for those of you asking) is a group of words that makes sense on its own. It also needs to contain a verb (a doing word). 'Because I get lots of presents' does not make sense on its own and is therefore not a sentence.

In the second example, although they are two complete sentences, the sentences are not about the same topic. There is no direct link between stating the day in one sentence and the nature of your Christmas tree in the next.

So there you have it: use a couple of semi-colons in your answers to questions 5 and 6. Ideally you should use them right at the beginning and right at the end (this way they stick in the examiner's head and remind him / her just how great you are).

COMMAS

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/Nb1kt93bAvI>

Commas direct us on how to read a piece of writing and are an incredibly complex piece of punctuation to use correctly. As with capital letters, there are a number of uses of commas.

1) Listing commas

This is the one everyone knows: we use commas to break up the items in a list, except for in-between the last two items where we use the word 'and'. The comma is correct if it can be replaced with the word 'and' or 'or'.

The four flavours of Starburst are: orange, lemon, lime and apple.

2) Commas for joining

Commas are used when two complete sentences are joined using conjunctions such as 'and, but' or 'so'.

The boys wanted to stay up and see Santa, but they grew tired and fell asleep.

3) Bracketing commas

This is my own personal favourite use of the comma, largely because it is a simple way of making your written work seem very impressive. Bracketing commas are used to mark off the beginning and end of a weak interruption to a sentence. In other words, you can lift the words out from between the two commas and the sentence still makes sense. Let me show you what I mean:

MrBruff.com, a brand new website, is being viewed 1000 times a day.

The above sentence would still make sense if we took the bit out between the bracketing commas, leaving us with:

MrBruff.com is being viewed 1000 times a day.

Like the previous section on sentence variety, the weak interruption is giving us more information about the subject of the sentence- in this case MrBruff.com.

4) Commas for subordinate clauses

Commas are used to break up the clauses in complex sentences. The comma always comes after the subordinate clause:

I am very tired, because I woke up at 5AM this morning.



On either side of this comma is a clause. The independent clause 'I am very tired' makes sense on its own, whereas the dependent clause 'because I woke up at 5AM this morning' requires more information to make sense. The clauses are divided with a comma.

One of the interesting things about complex sentences is that you can start the sentence with either clause. If you begin some of your sentences with the subordinate clause in the exam, it will add more variety to your writing:

Because I woke up at 5AM this morning, I am very tired.



Despite the rearrangement of sentence structure, the comma still comes after the subordinate clause.

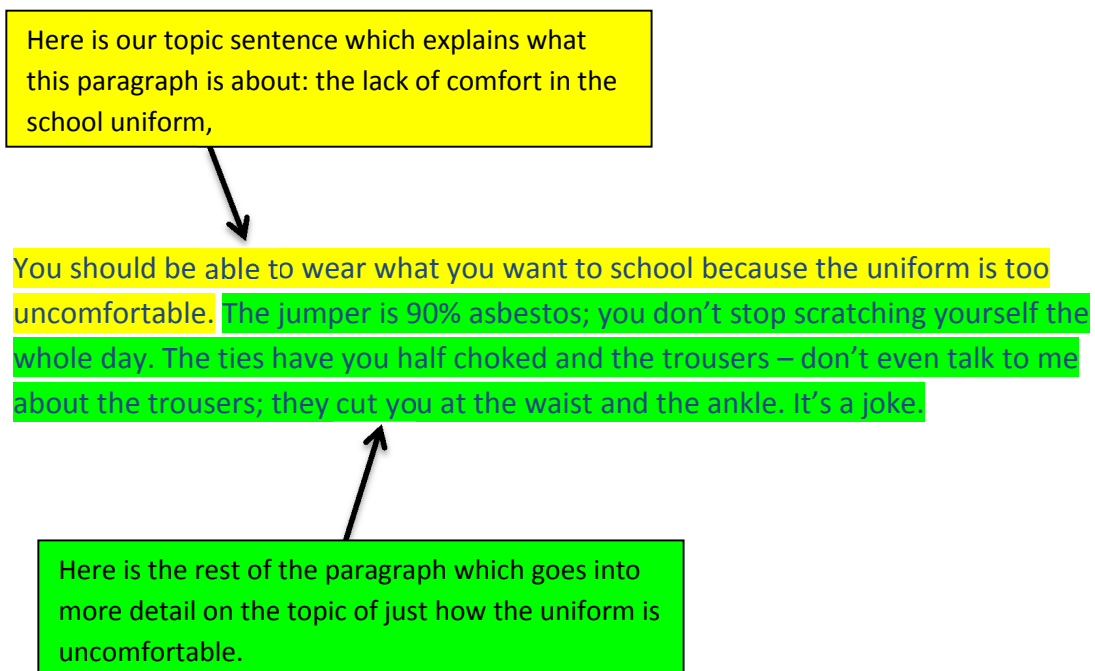
PARAGRAPHS

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/5yhIvSRhrNQ>

Paragraphs are often misunderstood. Students tend to skip a line when they have written quite a lot of text, but that is not what paragraphing is all about.

To start with, you should start a new paragraph when you change to a new idea or focus in your writing. Therefore, it helps if you are following a plan for your answer; you simply start a new paragraph when you move onto a new part of your plan.

Every paragraph needs a topic sentence. A topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph, which explains what the paragraph will be about. The rest of the paragraph then goes into more detail on this point. For example:



If you find yourself drifting onto a topic that is not the same as the topic sentence then it is time to start a new paragraph.

English Literature

Relationships Poetry

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

'Sonnet 43'

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: SONNET 43

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/zU8LldQE9s>

The Poet: Elizabeth Barrett Browning

When it comes to biographical detail, it is important that we only look at the details of a poet's life that are relevant to the poem itself. Therefore the following details should be considered:

- Born in 1806 and died in 1861
- A very successful poet who was published from the age of 15
- Suffered great sickness and invalidity for her entire adult life
- Famous in both the UK and USA during her lifetime
- The poet Robert Browning wrote to her as a fan and ended up becoming her husband
- A deeply Christian woman.

The Form: Sonnet

The sonnet is a genre of love poetry which originated in Italy in the 13th Century. The 14th Century poet Petrarch is the most recognised Italian sonneteer. Falling in love with a woman known only as 'Laura', he wrote 366 sonnets to her. However, she rejected his proposals. The Italian Sonnet follows a strict form:

- 14 lines
- The first 8 lines (known as the octave) present a problem
- The last 6 lines (known as the sestet) present a solution to the problem
- Line 9 (known as the Volta) introduces a sharp twist, or turn, which brings about the move to the resolution
- ABBA ABBA rhyme scheme.

The Shakespearean Sonnet

In the 16th Century, the sonnet made its way into English poetry. Sir Philip Sidney developed what has come to be known as the Shakespearean Sonnet (after Shakespeare made it truly famous). This is written in iambic pentameter (lines of 10 syllables, with alternating stressed and unstressed syllables). It was divided into 3 verses of four lines each, known as 'quatrains', and finished with a rhyming couplet which also served as the Volta. Its rhyme scheme was also different: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

Browning's Sonnet 43 follows the conventions of the Italian sonnet; perhaps Browning related to Petrarch's intense pre-marriage love more than Shakespeare's mixture of romantic and platonic sonnets? Perhaps she related to Petrarch's spirituality and shied away from Shakespeare's overtly sexual poetry.

The Context: 'Sonnets from the Portugese'

During their engagement, Elizabeth wrote 44 sonnets to Robert Browning, her husband to be. Robert was so impressed with the sonnets that he pushed Elizabeth to publish them. However, the sonnets were deeply personal and Elizabeth would only agree to publish them anonymously; she didn't want anyone to know that they were written by her.

'Sonnets from the Portugese' was published in 1850, promoted as an English translation of a collection of Portugese poems. The 'Portugese' part is a nod to Luis De Camoes, a Portugese sonneteer who Elizabeth admired greatly. 'My little Portugese' was also Robert's nickname for Elizabeth.

The Poem: Sonnet 43

You should begin by having a read through the poem. Most poems on the GCSE course have a simple, literal meaning and a hidden, deeper meaning. As you read the poem for the first time you should try and work out the simple, literal meaning. Also, highlight any words you don't understand. After reading, look up each word you are unsure of.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints!--I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!--and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

A modern translation

This poem is particularly difficult to understand. To help, I will begin with a 'modern translation' to help you get to grips with what the poem is saying at its most simplistic, literal level.

THE ORIGINAL POEM	MODERN TRANSLATION
How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.	How much do I love you? I will write you a list.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.	I love you massively and without knowing where our love will take us. My love for you is God-like and holy.
I love thee to the level of every day's Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.	I love you enough to cook and clean for you.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;	I love you without having to try.
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.	I love you with absolute purity.
I love thee with the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. I love thee with a love I seemed to lose With my lost saints!—	I love you with the same strong emotions I used to feel when I was really sick, and when I was a little girl learning about God.
-I love thee with the breath, Smiles, tears, of all my life!--	I love you for better and worse with all my life.
and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death.	If it's OK with God, I will carry on loving you in heaven.

Line By Line Analysis

Now you understand the basics of the poem, let's look at it line by line.

We begin with direct address – the poem is written to Robert Browning, seemingly in response to a question he has asked Elizabeth.

The tone in this question is hard to read – is Elizabeth angry that she has been asked such an accusatory question?

Far from being offended or upset by the question, Elizabeth delights in the opportunity to express her love for her husband to be. The exclamation mark shows just how excited she is to do this.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways!

A spatial metaphor is used (highlighted in yellow) to say 'I love every part of you'.

*I love thee to the **depth** and **breadth** and **height**
My **soul** can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal **Grace**.*

The soul is the mind and emotions of a person. It is every part of a person that isn't spiritual.

Grace is the Christian concept of God's undeserved favour in our lives; God does good things for us regardless of our performance.

By combining spiritual and non spiritual imagery in this sentence, Elizabeth is suggesting that the love she has for Robert is all encompassing; it engages both the spiritual and non spiritual parts of her – her whole being.

By 'quiet need' Elizabeth means the simple, domestic elements of life. In other words 'I will be a submissive wife to you and make your tea, scrub the toilet etc.' This is all the more powerful given the fact that Elizabeth was a celebrity at this point, yet she is willing to humble herself for the love of her life.

*I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, **by sun and candle-light.***

Sun and candlelight are symbols for youth and old age, day and night, strength and weakness. In all of these interpretations the message is clear: I will love you forever, through all stages of life.

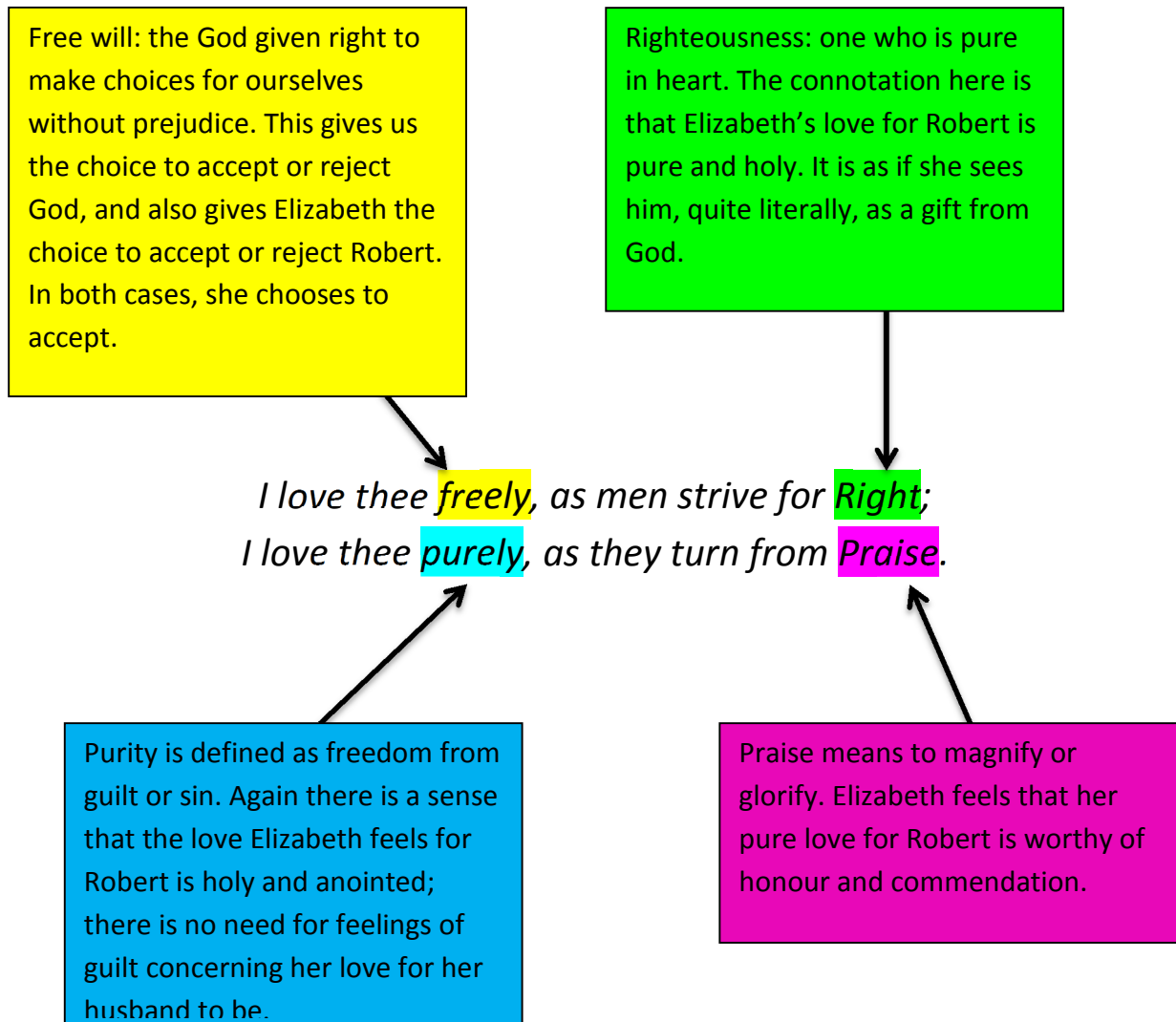
The first part of each of these two lines is fairly simple to understand: I love you of my own free will and I love you with purity and goodness.

This simile suggests that 'just as people freely choose to act morally, I freely choose to love you'. The term 'Right' is capitalised as it means the definitive right i.e. moral rightness.

***I love thee freely,** as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.*

Just as it is pure to modestly shy away from people's admiration, my love for you is pure. Elizabeth is surely writing from her own experience here of dealing with fame.

However, there is a secondary meaning to these lines, based in the religious imagery they connote. Consider the following:



And there we have our first eight lines, the octave of this sonnet. In this section of the poem Elizabeth has basically been comparing the love she has to the power of God. Like her love for God, her love for Robert is pure, holy and to be admired. As we move into the sestet of the poem it is clear that things become a little more sinister and even worrying.

The passion is a religious term, referring to the suffering Jesus went through before his crucifixion. Beaten, whipped, flogged and nailed to a cross, this word is deliberately used at this point of the poem to introduce a theme of suffering. What Elizabeth is essentially saying is that she will love Robert in the bad times, just as Christ remained faithful to God as he went through the agony of the passion.

*I love thee with **the passion** put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.*

Elizabeth is referring here to her lifetime of illness and invalidity which she experienced from the age of 15. She is saying that the intensity of feeling she felt in sickness is the same intensity she now feels in her love for Robert. Again this is a very negative image, surely pointing out that Elizabeth knows her relationship will contain problems, but she is more than happy to embrace them. She is not going into this relationship with unrealistic expectations.

This line is a Biblical reference to Matthew 18: 2-14 'Unless you change or become like little children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven'. This Bible verse speaks of accepting Jesus with your heart, not trying to intellectualise or figure everything out. In the same way, Elizabeth is loving Robert with a blind, trusting and child-like faith. Again this echoes earlier lines which suggest that this relationship is a risk – Elizabeth does not really know Robert that well but is committing her whole life to him.

*I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost Saints!—*



The catholic faith presents saints as virtuous people who have already entered heaven. However, Elizabeth wasn't a catholic, so the meaning here is unclear. My guess is that Elizabeth learnt about, and loved, the concept of saints as a child but as an adult rejected this catholic concept. Here she remembers the love she had as a child and translates it to Robert. Is there a suggestion that her love for Robert is unrealistic and will change as she learns the reality of him, just as she learnt the reality of saints?

The positive image of 'smiles' is juxtaposed with the negative image of 'tears' to suggest that Elizabeth's love echoes the wedding vows of 'for better or worse'. Again we get the sense that Elizabeth has very realistic expectations of the limitations of true love, but embraces it all the same.



*-I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!--- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.*



The idea here is that, if God allows it, the couple will go on loving after death when joined in heaven. By bringing God into the equation it again suggests a holiness and purity to the relationship.

So there we have it: Elizabeth is very aware of the limitations of relationships. She fully understands there will be elements of 'for better or worse' and yet loves Robert with a religious zeal that suggests their love is holy and pure.

Of course, all this is backed up by the strict adherence to the sonnet form. It isn't easy to follow those conventions in a poem, but by doing so Elizabeth is using structure and form to exclaim her love for her husband to be. To finish with, let's take a look at how the poem follows the sonnet form.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints!--I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life!--and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

The octave compares Elizabeth's love for Robert to her love for God.

The sestet makes comparisons between Elizabeth's intense feelings now and her intense feelings from childhood.

English Literature

Relationships Poetry

William Shakespeare

'Sonnet 116'

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: SONNET 116

Based on the video: <http://youtu.be/j3so-QNWN8w>

The Poet: William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is undoubtedly the most well-known poet in the anthology, meaning there is a plethora of biographical information available to sift through. However, this is actually a bad thing as it means we need to be discerning over which details to memorise. First off, let's look at the basics:

- Born in 1564 and died in 1616
- An English poet and playwright, he wrote 38 plays and 154 sonnets
- Married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 and had 3 children.

These simple facts give us the basics, but there are also some very important biographical details which will play a key part in our analysis of the poem:

- Shakespeare was a great friend of Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. Henry was a patron of Shakespeare's who supported him financially. Shakespeare dedicated his first published poems ('The Rape of Lucrece' and 'Venus Adonis') to Henry. This is important as it has often been suggested that Sonnet 116 is addressed to Henry (watch the video for evidence that suggests this to be the case).
- Shakespeare was famous at the time of writing this sonnet. This is significant because, at the end of the poem, Shakespeare wagers his entire writing career in a bet. This would have been a significant bet as Shakespeare was an established and successful writer at the time of writing.

The Form: Sonnet

The sonnet is a genre of love poetry which originated in Italy in the 13th Century. The 14th Century poet Petrarch is the most recognised Italian sonneteer. Falling in love with a woman known only as 'Laura', he wrote 366 sonnets to her. However, she rejected his proposals.

The Italian Sonnet follows a strict form:

- 14 lines
- The first 8 lines (known as the octave) present a problem
- The last 6 lines (known as the sestet) present a solution to the problem
- Line 9 (known as the Volta) introduces a sharp twist, or turn, which brings about the move to the resolution
- ABBA ABBA rhyme scheme.

The Shakespearean Sonnet

In the 16th Century, the sonnet made its way into English poetry. Sir Philip Sidney developed it, but it came to be known as the Shakespearean sonnet (after Shakespeare made it truly famous). This form is quite different to the Petrarchan sonnet:

- It is written in iambic pentameter (lines of 10 syllables, with alternating stressed and unstressed syllables).
- It is divided into 3 verses of four lines each, known as 'quatrains', and finished with a rhyming couplet which also served as the Volta.
- Its rhyme scheme is also different: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

However, the topic of Shakespearean sonnets remains the same: they are all about love.

The Context

Shakespeare published his sonnets in 1609. The collection contained 154 sonnets in total. In a shocking twist to the standard use of sonnets, the first 126 were addressed to a **man** known only as 'fair youth'. Since the date of publication there has been speculation over whether this male to male love was purely platonic and friendship based, or romantic and sexual. Bearing in mind the poem was written at a time when homosexuality was a crime punishable by execution, it was a brave move by Shakespeare to publish these sonnets at all. If his love was sexual he risked death in professing it. If his love was platonic, he risked being misunderstood and getting into trouble. The aim of my notes is to examine the evidence for both platonic and romantic interpretations: giving alternative interpretations is one of the A* skills in the exam, so keep both ideas in mind.

The Poem

Most poems on the GCSE course have a simple, literal meaning and a hidden, deeper meaning. As you read the poem for the first time you should try and work out the simple, literal meaning. You should also jot down any words you do not understand (with Shakespeare there are bound to be a few of these). Use an online dictionary to find the meaning before moving onto the next section of this guide.

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments; love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove.

O no it is an ever-fixed mark,

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

After your first reading you should make an initial judgement: is this poem about romantic, sexual love or platonic, friendship based love? Can you pick out any words or phrases in particular which influence your decision one way or the other?

It may be that the language is too difficult for you, on first reading, to make any judgements just yet. This is a very common complaint with modern readers of Shakespeare. The only way to combat this is to read more Shakespeare – after a while it will become natural to you.

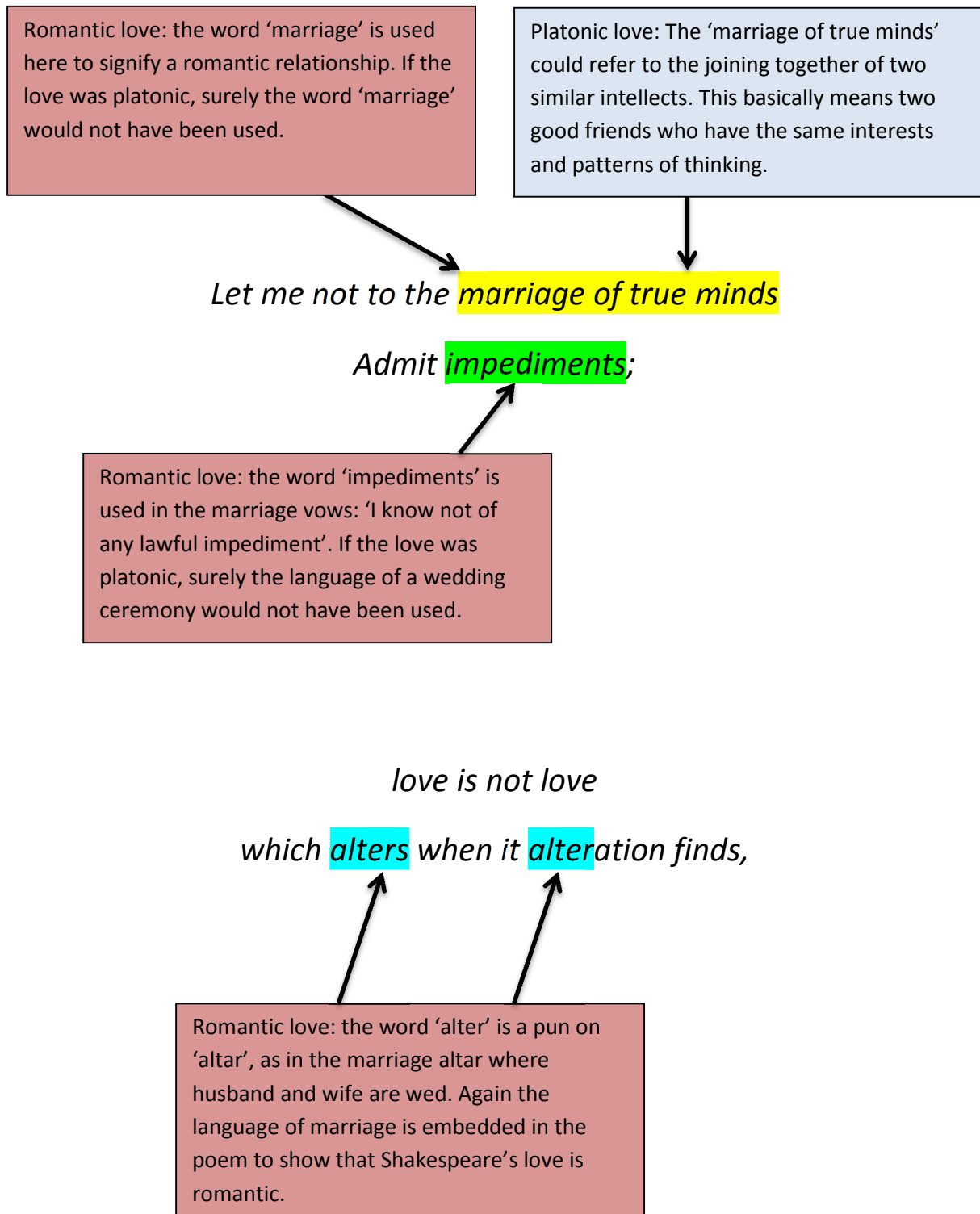
A modern translation

This poem is quite difficult to understand. I will begin with a 'modern translation' to help you get to grips with what the poem is saying at its most simplistic, literal level.

THE ORIGINAL POEM	MODERN TRANSLATION
Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments;	Nothing should get in the way of two likeminded people being together;
love is not love which alters when it alteration finds,	True love does not change when faced with difficult circumstances,
Or bends with the remover to remove.	True love doesn't stop when one partner stops loving the other.
O no it is an ever-fixed mark, That looks on tempests and is never shaken;	Despite the storms of life, true love is steady and stable;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,	Love is stable and fixed like a star in the sky,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.	It is immense and invaluable
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks	Love does not change over time, even though physical beauty is;
Within his bending sickle's compass come;	Love does not change,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, But bears it out even to the edge of doom. If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved.	But remains to the end. If I am wrong I never wrote anything, and no man ever loved.

Line by Line Analysis

Now you understand the basics of the poem, let's look at it in more detail. For each line I will see if I can interpret the language as romantic **and** platonic love. Any analysis of the love as romantic will be presented in text boxes that are dark **pink**. Any analysis of the love as platonic will be presented in text boxes that are light **blue**. Any analysis which does not fit either interpretation, but is useful to our understanding, will be highlighted in different colours.



Near repetition of 'remove' shows that love is constant – it won't change the way appearances do.

Or bends with the remover to remove.

Romantic love: the reference to love being like a lighthouse which is not affected by sea storms is the first of many examples of imagery in the poem that is related to sailors. In Shakespeare's time sailors were reputed to regularly engage in homosexual relationships. Is this a subtle hint at the romantic love Shakespeare was feeling?

O no it is an ever-fixed mark,

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

Romantic love: Another example of sailor imagery here: the Pole star, which remains in the same place in the sky and helps sailors to navigate, is used as a metaphor. On the rough seas of life, Shakespeare's love remains constant.

*It is **the star to every wand'ring bark,***

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Platonic love: these lines are basically saying 'true love is not affected by time like physical beauty is'. By rejecting physical beauty (which would be just as important in homosexual as well as heterosexual love) Shakespeare is showing that his love is not romantic but platonic.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Romantic love: the 'sickle' here refers to the implement carried about by Death. Like the lighthouse before it, it is a very phallic image. Shakespeare is renowned for using Phallic imagery to symbolise sexuality.

See notes on 'altar' from line 2.

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

The Biblical definition of the end times, a time of suffering and tribulation before Christians are taken to heaven.

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Here Shakespeare wagers his entire written works on the bet that he is right about love. Remember, he was a successful writer at the time so this wager was significant.

Romantic love: This is a clever little line which can be interpreted in two ways: either it means 'no man ever loved anyone' or it means 'I never loved any man'. Of course, the second meaning could still only mean a platonic love, but it's a clever play on words to finish the poem with.

In conclusion, there are two ways of interpreting this poem. Either Shakespeare is using the sonnet form in an ambiguous and playful way to present his platonic love for a male friend, or he is using the sonnet form as intended when created in the 13th Century: to present feelings of romantic and sexual love. To hit the top grades in the exam you should aim to present both interpretations.

You have now reached the end of this draft of the Mr Bruff Revision Guide. However, I am working on further chapters on a daily basis, so please check back at mrbruff.com every week or so to check for updates. By the time this guide is finished it will contain everything in the contents page and very possibly more!

Has this guide been useful to you? I would love to hear your feedback: abruff@live.co.uk