GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 2 Modern texts and poetry

Tuesday 20 May 2025 Morning Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes

Materials
For this paper you must have:
- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 8702/2.
- Answer **one** question from **Section A**, **one** question from **Section B** and **both** questions in **Section C**.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 96.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A**. There are 4 marks available for AO4 in **Section A** in addition to 30 marks for answering the question. AO4 assesses the following skills: use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section B** and 32 marks for **Section C**.

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

stemup.co.uk

SECTION A

Modern prose or drama		Questions	Page
JB Priestley	*An Inspector Calls*	1–2	4
Willy Russell	*Blood Brothers*	3–4	5
Chinonyerem Odimba	*Princess & The Hustler*	5–6	6
Dennis Kelly	*DNA*	7–8	7
Winsome Pinnock	*Leave Taking*	9–10	8
Shelagh Delaney	*A Taste of Honey*	11–12	9
William Golding	*Lord of the Flies*	13–14	10
AQA Anthology	*Telling Tales*	15–16	11
George Orwell	*Animal Farm*	17–18	12
Kit de Waal	*My Name Is Leon*	19–20	13
Meera Syal	*Anita and Me*	21–22	14
Stephen Kelman	*Pigeon English*	23–24	15

SECTION B

Poetry		Questions	Page
AQA Anthology	*Poems Past and Present*		
	Love and relationships	25	17
	Power and conflict	26	19
	Worlds and lives	27	21

SECTION C

Unseen poetry		28.1	22
		28.2	23

Turn over for Section A

stemup.co.uk

Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Either

0 1 How does Priestley present Gerald and Sheila's changing relationship in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- Gerald and Sheila's relationship in the play
- how Priestley presents Gerald and Sheila's changing relationship.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 2 How does Priestley present ideas about power in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- some of the ideas about power that are shown in the play
- how Priestley presents ideas about power.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Willy Russell: *Blood Brothers*

or

0 3 How does Russell present the changes in Mickey and Edward's relationship throughout the play?

Write about:

- Mickey and Edward's relationship
- how Russell presents the changes in Mickey and Edward's relationship.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 4 How does Russell present the effects of social class in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- the effects of social class that are shown in the play
- how Russell presents the effects of social class.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Chinonyerem Odimba: *Princess & The Hustler*

or

0 5 How does Odimba present the relationship between Mavis and Princess in *Princess & The Hustler*?

Write about:

- the relationship between Mavis and Princess
- how Odimba presents the relationship between Mavis and Princess.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 6 How does Odimba present Princess's dreams as important to her in *Princess & The Hustler*?

Write about:

- what Princess dreams about
- how Odimba presents Princess's dreams as important to her.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Dennis Kelly: *DNA*

or

0 7 How does Kelly use the character of Leah to explore ideas about human nature in *DNA*?

Write about:

- what Leah says and does
- how Kelly uses Leah to explore ideas about human nature.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 8 How does Kelly use the character of Adam to explore ideas about bullying in *DNA*?

Write about:

- what Adam says and does and what happens to him in the play
- how Kelly uses Adam to explore ideas about bullying.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Winsome Pinnock: *Leave Taking*

or

0 9 How does Pinnock present difficult relationships between older and younger characters in *Leave Taking*?

Write about:

- relationships between older and younger characters in the play
- how Pinnock presents difficult relationships between older and younger characters.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 0 How far does Pinnock present the character of Enid as a strong mother in *Leave Taking*?

Write about:

- what Enid says and does
- how far Pinnock presents Enid as a strong mother in the play.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Shelagh Delaney: *A Taste of Honey*

or

1 1 How far does Delaney present Peter as a selfish and unpleasant character in *A Taste of Honey*?

Write about:

- what Peter says and does
- how far Delaney presents Peter as a selfish and unpleasant character.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 2 How does Delaney present characters in conflict with each other in *A Taste of Honey*?

Write about:

- characters in conflict with each other
- how Delaney presents characters in conflict with each other.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

or

1 3 How does Golding present the changing relationship between Ralph and Jack in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- what happens in Ralph and Jack's relationship
- how Golding presents the changing relationship between Ralph and Jack.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 4 How far does Golding use the character of Simon to explore ideas about goodness in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- what Simon says and does
- how far Golding uses Simon to explore ideas about goodness.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

AQA Anthology: *Telling Tales*

or

1 5 How do writers present characters dealing with loss in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- the characters dealing with loss in the **two** stories
- how the characters are presented.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 6 How do writers present conflict between generations in 'Korea' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- conflict between generations in the **two** stories
- how conflict is presented.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

or

1 7 'In *Animal Farm* Orwell suggests that no society can ever be truly equal.'

How far do you agree with this view of *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- examples of equality and inequality in the novel
- how far Orwell presents society as unequal in the novel.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 8 How far does Orwell present Napoleon as responsible for the failure of the revolution in *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- what Napoleon says and does
- how far Orwell presents Napoleon as responsible for the failure of the revolution.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Kit de Waal: *My Name Is Leon*

or

1 9 How does de Waal present the importance of Maureen in Leon's life?

Write about:

- the relationship that Maureen has with Leon
- how de Waal presents the importance of Maureen in Leon's life.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 0 How does de Waal explore ideas about loyalty in *My Name Is Leon*?

Write about:

- examples of characters showing loyalty in the novel
- how de Waal presents ideas about loyalty.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Meera Syal: *Anita and Me*

or

2 1 How far does Syal present Anita as a powerful character in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- what Anita says and does in the novel
- how far Syal presents Anita as a powerful character.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 2 How does Syal use the setting of Tollington to explore ideas about how society is changing in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- what Tollington is like and what happens there
- how Syal uses Tollington to explore ideas about society changing.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Stephen Kelman: *Pigeon English*

or

2 3 How does Kelman present the effects of violence on Harrison and his community in *Pigeon English*?

Write about:

- the violence in the novel
- how Kelman presents the effects of the violence.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 4 How far does Kelman present Miquita as a frightening and threatening character in *Pigeon English*?

Write about:

- what Miquita says and does
- how far Kelman presents Miquita as a frightening and threatening character.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for Section B

stemup.co.uk

Section B: Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

AQA Anthology: *Poems Past and Present*

Either

Love and relationships

The poems you have studied are:

Lord Byron	When We Two Parted
Percy Bysshe Shelley	Love's Philosophy
Robert Browning	Porphyria's Lover
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!'
Thomas Hardy	Neutral Tones
Maura Dooley	Letters from Yorkshire
Charlotte Mew	The Farmer's Bride
Cecil Day-Lewis	Walking Away
Charles Causley	Eden Rock
Seamus Heaney	Follower
Simon Armitage	Mother, any distance
Carol Ann Duffy	Before You Were Mine
Owen Sheers	Winter Swans
Daljit Nagra	Singh Song!
Andrew Waterhouse	Climbing My Grandfather

stemup.co.uk

2 5 Compare how poets present feelings about growing up in 'Follower' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

Follower

My father worked with a horse-plough,
His shoulders globed like a full sail strung
Between the shafts and the furrow.
The horse strained at his clicking tongue.

An expert. He would set the wing
And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.
The sod rolled over without breaking.
At the headrig, with a single pluck

Of reins, the sweating team turned round
And back into the land. His eye
Narrowed and angled at the ground,
Mapping the furrow exactly.

I stumbled in his hob-nailed wake,
Fell sometimes on the polished sod;
Sometimes he rode me on his back
Dipping and rising to his plod.

I wanted to grow up and plough,
To close one eye, stiffen my arm.
All I ever did was follow
In his broad shadow round the farm.

I was a nuisance, tripping, falling,
Yapping always. But today
It is my father who keeps stumbling
Behind me, and will not go away.

Seamus Heaney

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

or

Power and conflict

The poems you have studied are:

Percy Bysshe Shelley	Ozymandias
William Blake	London
William Wordsworth	Extract from, The Prelude
Robert Browning	My Last Duchess
Alfred Lord Tennyson	The Charge of the Light Brigade
Wilfred Owen	Exposure
Seamus Heaney	Storm on the Island
Ted Hughes	Bayonet Charge
Simon Armitage	Remains
Jane Weir	Poppies
Carol Ann Duffy	War Photographer
Imtiaz Dharker	Tissue
Carol Rumens	The Emigrée
John Agard	Checking Out Me History
Beatrice Garland	Kamikaze

stemup.co.uk

2 6 Compare how poets present ideas about conflict in 'Exposure' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

[30 marks]

Exposure

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us ...
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent ...
Low, drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient ...
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow ...
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces –
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-dazed,
Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.
– Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are closed, –
We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were born,
For love of God seems dying.

Tonight, this frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
But nothing happens.

Wilfred Owen

stemup.co.uk

or

Worlds and lives

The poems you have studied are:

William Wordsworth	Lines Written in Early Spring
Percy Bysshe Shelley	England in 1819
Emily Brontë	Shall earth no more inspire thee
George Eliot	In a London Drawingroom
James Berry	On an Afternoon Train from Purley to Victoria, 1955
Raman Mundair	Name Journeys
Shamshad Khan	pot
Seni Seneviratne	A Wider View
Liz Berry	Homing
Imtiaz Dharker	A century later
Louisa Adjoa Parker	The Jewellery Maker
Raymond Antrobus	With Birds You’re Never Lonely
Roger Robinson	A Portable Paradise
Grace Nichols	Like an Heiress
Caleb Femi	Thirteen

stemup.co.uk

2 7 Compare how poets present the ways places affect people's lives in 'In a London Drawingroom' and in **one** other poem from 'Worlds and lives'.

[30 marks]

In a London Drawingroom

The sky is cloudy, yellowed by the smoke.
For view there are the houses opposite
Cutting the sky with one long line of wall
Like solid fog: far as the eye can stretch
Monotony of surface & of form
Without a break to hang a guess upon.
No bird can make a shadow as it flies,
For all is shadow, as in ways o'erhung
By thickest canvass, where the golden rays
Are clothed in hemp. No figure lingering
Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye
Or rest a little on the lap of life.
All hurry on & look upon the ground,
Or glance unmarking at the passers by
The wheels are hurrying too, cabs, carriages
All closed, in multiplied identity.
The world seems one huge prison-house & court
Where men are punished at the slightest cost,
With lowest rate of colour, warmth & joy.

George Eliot

Turn over for Section C

stemup.co.uk

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The poem 'Table' by Robert Hull has not been reproduced here due to third party copyright restrictions.

2 8 . 1 In 'Table', how does the poet present feelings about home and family?

[24 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Like a Beacon

In London
every now and then
I get this craving
for my mother's food
I leave art galleries
in search of plantains
saltfish/sweet potatoes*

I need this link

I need this touch
of home
swinging my bag
like a beacon
against the cold

*Types of Caribbean food.

Grace Nichols

2 8 . 2 In both 'Like a Beacon' and 'Table' the speakers describe feelings about home and family.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the methods the poets use to present these feelings?

[8 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

Copyright information

For confidentiality purposes, all acknowledgements of third-party copyright material are published in a separate booklet. This booklet is published after each live examination series and is available for free download from www.aqa.org.uk

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders may have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements. If you have any queries please contact the Copyright Team.

Copyright © 2025 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

stemup.co.uk

Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

01

Priestley uses the changing relationship between Gerald and Sheila to expose the hypocrisy behind respectable Edwardian courtship and to show which generation can learn from the Inspector. At the start their engagement looks like a perfect romance, but it is really a business arrangement built on secrets and male privilege. By the end Sheila has grown into an independent moral voice who refuses to slip back into the old pretence, while Gerald, like the older Birlings, wants everything to return to normal. Their relationship therefore becomes a measure of how far each character can change.

In Act One the relationship seems idyllic but is quietly unequal. Sheila is introduced as "very pleased with life and rather excited", and her girlish delight at the ring, "isn't it a beauty?", suggests that she values the engagement as a glittering possession. Gerald is "rather too manly to be a dandy", the "easy well-bred young man-about-town", and his ease reflects his confidence in his own social superiority. Mr Birling's toast reveals what the match really means to him: he hopes for "lower costs and higher prices" once Crofts and Birling work together. Priestley makes the marriage feel like a merger, implying that in 1912 upper middle-class women were valuable chiefly as a way of joining families and fortunes.

Yet even before the Inspector arrives, Priestley plants doubts. Sheila's playful accusation that Gerald "never came near" her "all last summer" is phrased as a joke, but the dramatic irony is strong because the audience will soon learn why. Gerald's excuse that he was "awfully busy at the works" is smooth and evasive. Mrs Birling's advice that Sheila will have to "get used to that, just as I had"

Question number

normalises male absence and secrecy, showing how older women taught daughters to accept double standards. The pink lighting, "pink and intimate", becomes symbolic of a rosy illusion that the Inspector will replace with harder light.

The turning point comes when the name Daisy Renton is mentioned. Gerald's startled reaction allows Sheila to see through him instantly, and the end of Act One is built on this revelation: "he knows. Of course he knows." Priestley places the moment as a cliffhanger, so that the relationship, not just the investigation, becomes a source of tension. Gerald's response is to try to protect Sheila and himself by keeping her out of the room, presenting her as too delicate to hear the truth. However, Sheila insists on staying. Priestley shows that Gerald's chivalry is really a way of controlling information, and Sheila's refusal marks her first step away from the passive role expected of women.

Gerald's confession in Act Two is revealing. He describes Daisy as "young and pretty and warm-hearted", and admits that he became "the most important person in her life". His language suggests genuine feeling, yet it also reveals vanity and the power of a wealthy man over a poor girl. Sheila's sarcastic "the wonderful Fairy Prince" mocks his self-image as a rescuer. Strikingly, her response is not hysteria but honesty: she says she respects him more for telling the truth, yet she returns the ring, having already recognised that they are no longer "the same people who sat down to dinner". Priestley presents a woman who judges a man on moral grounds rather than on status, which would have seemed progressive to a 1945 audience living through women's changing roles after two world wars.

In Act Three the gap between them becomes final in attitude, if not formally. When Gerald discovers that there may have been no real Inspector and no single dead girl, he holds up the ring and says "Everything's all right now, Sheila." The

Question number

word "everything" exposes his belief that the truth only matters if there are consequences. Sheila's reply, "No, not yet. It's too soon. I must think", is made up of short, firm sentences that show her new maturity. She no longer needs Gerald's approval, and Priestley uses her hesitation to suggest that a marriage resting on the old hypocrisies cannot simply resume.

Ultimately, the changing relationship carries Priestley's socialist message. Gerald, older and of a higher class, aligns himself with Mr Birling and the comfortable world of capitalist privilege, while Sheila aligns herself with the Inspector's belief that "we are responsible for each other". By leaving their future unresolved, Priestley challenges his post-war audience to choose Sheila's path: to see through charming surfaces, reject sexual and class double standards, and build relationships, and a society, on honesty and responsibility.

02 Priestley presents power as something that the wealthy assume is theirs by right, but which is ultimately shown to be fragile and morally empty. Through the Birlings' attempts to dominate, the Inspector's quiet authority and the fate of Eva Smith, he argues that power in a capitalist society is used to protect privilege rather than people, and he urges his 1945 audience to imagine a fairer kind of power based on collective responsibility.

At the start of the play, power seems to rest firmly with Mr Birling. The stage directions describe a dining room that is "substantial and heavily comfortable", and the lighting is "pink and intimate", suggesting a cosy, self-satisfied world that has never been challenged. Birling dominates the conversation with long speeches, confidently predicting that the Titanic is "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" and dismissing "community and all that nonsense". The dramatic irony undermines his

Question number

authority instantly: a 1945 audience, having lived through two world wars and the sinking of the Titanic, knows that his judgement is worthless. Priestley therefore shows that economic power does not equal wisdom.

The arrival of the Inspector shifts the balance dramatically. His entrance interrupts Birling's lecture that a man must "look after himself and his own", and the timing suggests that Priestley is sending him to challenge exactly this selfish philosophy. The stage directions give him "an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness", and he has a habit of looking hard at the person he addresses before speaking. Though he is socially inferior to the Birlings, he controls the pace of the evening, showing the photograph to one character at a time and deciding the order of the confessions. Priestley presents a different kind of power here: moral authority that does not depend on money or rank.

The Birlings respond by trying to reassert their social status. Mr Birling reminds the Inspector that he was "Lord Mayor two years ago" and is an old friend of the Chief Constable, implying that he can use connections to escape scrutiny. Mrs Birling is even more dismissive, using phrases such as "girls of that class" to place Eva beneath consideration, and she proudly admits that she used her "influence" to refuse Eva help from the charity. The Inspector's reply, "Public men, Mr Birling, have responsibilities as well as privileges", reframes power as a duty rather than a reward. Priestley is clearly attacking the Edwardian upper middle class, who held power through business and local government but felt no obligation towards the workers who made them rich.

The story of Eva Smith reveals the human cost of this misuse of power. Each Birling exercises a different form of it over her. Birling sacks her for asking for higher wages, reasoning that if he did not "come down sharply" the workers would

Question number

be "asking for the earth". Sheila abuses her position as a wealthy customer to get Eva dismissed from Milwards out of jealousy. Gerald uses his wealth and charm to keep Eva as his mistress, and Eric uses his physical and social power in a far more disturbing way. Eva is powerless at every stage, and her name, suggesting Eve and the "Smith" of ordinary working people, makes her a symbol of the exploited working class. Priestley shows that power in a hierarchical society moves in one direction only: downwards, onto those least able to resist.

However, Priestley also suggests that power can shift between generations. Sheila and Eric gradually side with the Inspector, and by Act Three they challenge their parents openly. Sheila's insistence that "these girls aren't cheap labour" but "people" directly rejects her father's view of workers as tools. The elder Birlings' authority crumbles as their children refuse to obey them, which reflects Priestley's hope that the young generation of 1945 would vote for change.

The Inspector's final speech is the climax of Priestley's message. Using the inclusive pronoun in "We are members of one body", he presents society as an organism in which everyone depends on everyone else. His warning that those who do not learn will be taught "in fire and blood and anguish" is a chilling reference to the two world wars that the audience had just experienced. In this moment the Inspector holds absolute power over the room, yet he uses it to teach rather than to oppress.

The cyclical ending, with the telephone call announcing a real inspector on his way, suggests that the Birlings cannot escape judgement, however hard they try to restore their comfortable control. Ultimately, Priestley presents power as hollow when it serves only the self, and he challenges his audience to support a society, such as the welfare state being created after 1945, in which power is used to

Question number

protect the vulnerable.

03 Russell presents Mickey and Edward's relationship as a friendship that begins in innocent equality but is slowly poisoned by class. As children the twins are drawn together by instinct, as teenagers their differences are still bridged by affection, but as adults the gap in money, education and opportunity turns love into resentment and finally tragedy. Through this changing relationship, Russell argues that it is not superstition but the class system of 1980s Britain that divides people who are, quite literally, born the same.

When the boys first meet at seven, Russell presents an instant and joyful bond. Mickey proudly tells Edward "I'm nearly eight", and the humour of this childish competitiveness, alongside Edward's eager offer of sweets, makes them seem completely natural together. Their differences in speech are clear: Mickey's Liverpudlian dialect and swearing contrast with Edward's polite, standard English, and Edward's delight at Mickey's rude words suggests that each boy is fascinated by what the other has. Yet these differences do not matter to them. The ritual of becoming "blood brothers" is full of dramatic irony, because the audience knows they really are brothers. Russell uses the casting of adult actors playing children to make the audience laugh, but also to remind us that these innocent boys are already marked by fate.

The adults quickly interfere. Mrs Lyons, terrified of losing Edward, forbids the friendship, and the superstition she invented about twins dying if they learn the truth hangs over every meeting. The Narrator's ominous refrain that "the devil's got your number" reinforces a sense that the boys' closeness is dangerous. Russell structures the play so that every attempt to separate them fails, as if the bond

Question number

between them is too strong for adults to break. This could suggest that natural affection is stronger than social barriers, at least in childhood.

As teenagers, the relationship is renewed rather than destroyed. After the Johnstones move to Skelmersdale and the Lyons family moves to the country, the boys meet again by chance, and the song "That Guy" shows each boy envying the other. Mickey wishes he had Edward's confidence and ease, while Edward wishes he had Mickey's dark, brooding looks and his ease with girls. The parallel structure of the song highlights their similarity: both are insecure, both are idealising someone else. Russell uses this moment to suggest that the boys are equally human, but that each is already being shaped by his environment. The shared friendship with Linda keeps them together, yet it also plants the seed of later jealousy.

The turning point comes when the boys reach adulthood. Edward goes away to university, while Mickey marries Linda, who is pregnant, and is then made redundant from the factory. When Edward returns at Christmas, full of carefree enthusiasm, Mickey is bitter and withdrawn. Edward's naive suggestion that if he were unemployed he would simply find something else to do shows how little he understands Mickey's reality. Mickey's angry response, that he grew up while Edward was away, marks the collapse of their equality. Russell presents Edward's privilege as a kind of isolation: he has had money and education but has been protected from real life, while Mickey has been forced to grow up too soon. The 1980s audience, living through Thatcher's Britain and mass unemployment in places like Liverpool, would recognise the injustice.

Mickey's imprisonment and his dependence on antidepressants deepen the divide. Edward, now a councillor, uses his influence to find Mickey and Linda a house and

Question number

a job, but this generosity feels humiliating to Mickey, who realises that Edward has power over his life. The affair between Edward and Linda, which Mrs Lyons reveals to Mickey, is the final betrayal. Russell shows that the friendship has been reversed: what began with Edward sharing sweets ends with Edward appearing to take everything Mickey has.

The ending brings the relationship to its tragic conclusion. Mickey confronts Edward at the council meeting with a gun, and when Mrs Johnstone reveals that they are twins, Mickey's anguished cry "I could have been him!" shows that he finally understands that only luck and class separated them. The deaths of both brothers, followed by the Narrator's question about whether we should blame superstition or "what we, the English, have come to know as class", make Russell's purpose clear. The changing relationship is a microcosm of a divided society, and Russell wants his audience to see that the system that pulled the twins apart is human and therefore could be changed.

04 Russell presents social class as the hidden force that decides the fate of every character in Blood Brothers. By separating identical twins at birth and following their lives in parallel, he turns the play into a social experiment, showing that wealth brings security, education and second chances, while poverty brings debt, crime and despair. Writing in 1980s Britain, at a time of mass unemployment in cities like Liverpool, Russell wants his audience to recognise that the tragedy is not caused by fate or superstition but by a class system that people have built and could change.

The effects of class are clear from the opening. Mrs Johnstone is a single mother with too many children, struggling on low wages and buying on credit from the

Question number

catalogue, so that the Catalogue Man and the Finance Man can arrive to take her goods away. Her decision to give one twin to Mrs Lyons is driven by poverty rather than choice: she cannot feed another child. By contrast, Mrs Lyons has a large house and money, but cannot have children, and she is able to use her power as an employer to persuade, and then threaten, Mrs Johnstone. Russell shows that class allows the rich to take even children from the poor, and the bargain sworn on the Bible becomes the root of the tragedy.

Russell's use of language highlights the gulf between the twins. Mickey's Liverpudlian dialect and swearing contrast with Edward's polite standard English and his innocent eagerness to share his sweets. When they first meet, these differences are a source of comedy and fascination, and the humour suggests that the boys are equally lovable. However, the audience soon sees that the adult world judges them very differently.

This is most obvious in the scene with the policeman. When Mickey, Linda and Edward are caught throwing stones, the policeman threatens Mrs Johnstone with court, but at the Lyons' house he treats the incident as more of a prank and accepts a drink from Mr Lyons. The parallel structure of these two short scenes makes the injustice impossible to miss. Russell exposes how the law, which should be equal, bends in favour of the middle class, so that the same behaviour is criminal in one boy and harmless high spirits in the other.

Education extends the divide. Edward goes to a private boarding school and then to university, while Mickey is suspended from his secondary modern school. Later, Mickey works in a factory making boxes but is made redundant, and the song in which the employer dictates letters to "Miss Jones" shows how quickly unemployment spreads from boardroom decisions down to ordinary workers. When

Question number

Edward returns from university he cannot understand why Mickey is so bitter, and his carefree attitude to unemployment reveals how class shields the privileged from reality. Russell may be suggesting that middle-class kindness without understanding is not enough.

The Narrator acts like a chorus, constantly reminding the audience that the outcome is already decided. His warning that "the devil's got your number" and his superstitious images of "shoes upon the table" create a sense of inevitability. Yet Russell deliberately blurs superstition with class. Mrs Lyons invents the superstition that twins separated at birth will die if they learn the truth, so the play's apparent fate is actually a lie created by a wealthy woman to protect what she has taken. This suggests that the forces which seem supernatural are in fact human and social.

The effects of class reach their most painful point in Mickey's breakdown. After he is drawn into a robbery with Sammy and sent to prison, he becomes dependent on antidepressants, losing the playful energy he had as a child. Edward, now a councillor, can help him only from a position of power, finding Linda a house and Mickey a job, which leaves Mickey feeling humiliated rather than grateful. When he discovers Edward's affair with Linda, his despair has nowhere to go but violence.

The ending makes Russell's argument explicit. Mickey's cry "I could have been him!" shows that he finally realises that the only difference between them was the family they were given to. Both twins die, which suggests that the class system destroys rich and poor alike. The Narrator then asks whether we should blame superstition or "what we, the English, have come to know as class", turning the question directly on the audience. Russell's purpose is clear: Blood Brothers is not just a sad story of two boys but a protest against a society in which the

Question number

circumstances of birth decide whether a child flourishes or is destroyed.

07 Kelly uses Leah as the moral voice of DNA, a character who talks endlessly about what humans are and whether they can be good, while the people around her prove how easily they can be bad. Her long, rambling speeches act almost like a chorus, creating a philosophical framework for the play's violence. Yet Kelly makes her a deeply flawed conscience: she understands the darkness in human nature but is too dependent on Phil, and on the group, to stop it. Through her, Kelly explores whether human beings are naturally cruel, naturally kind, or simply driven by fear and the need to belong.

From her first appearance, Leah is defined by talk. Her opening question to Phil, "What are you thinking?", is met with complete silence, and Kelly builds the whole scene as a monologue disguised as a conversation. The contrast between her loquacity and Phil's silent eating is comic, but it also has a darker meaning. Leah fills the silence with anxious self-criticism, apologising, contradicting herself and worrying about what Phil thinks of her. This suggests a basic human need for approval and connection, and it hints that Leah's insecurity makes her vulnerable to Phil's control. Kelly's broken, overlapping dialogue, full of hesitations and self-corrections, makes her sound like an authentic teenager while showing a restless mind trying to make sense of the world.

Leah's most important contribution is her speech about bonobos. She explains that humans share almost all of their DNA with both chimpanzees and bonobos, but that while chimpanzees can be territorial and violent, bonobos resolve conflict peacefully and share. Coming after the group has already caused Adam's apparent death and covered it up, the speech seems unrelated to the action, but it actually

Question number

raises the central question of the play: which side of our nature will we follow? The title itself, DNA, suggests that behaviour might be genetic, something we cannot escape. However, Leah's hope that humans could be more like the bonobos implies that cruelty is not inevitable. Kelly uses her to set out a debate between nature and choice, and the rest of the play tests it.

Kelly also uses Leah to show how intelligence and morality are not the same as courage. In Act One the group's account of what they did to Adam is horrifying, but Leah is part of the group that covers it up. She is sharp enough to see that what they did was wrong, and her nervous chatter suggests guilt, yet she follows Phil's plan. This reflects ideas about groupthink and the bystander effect: people who know something is wrong often stay silent because the group's approval matters more. Kelly wrote DNA for the National Theatre's Connections programme for young people, and Leah perhaps represents the many teenagers who disapprove of bullying but do not speak up.

The crisis comes when Adam is found alive in the woods. Phil coldly decides that he must be killed to protect the group, and Leah is the only character who openly resists. Her horror and pleading show that her talk about goodness was sincere. However, she cannot stop him, and Cathy and Brian lead Adam away. Kelly's stage directions and the swift, brutal way Phil overrides her show how fragile one conscience is against a ruthless leader. This moment is the climax of Kelly's exploration of human nature: the capacity for extreme cruelty appears not in a monster, but in an ordinary schoolboy calmly eating.

Leah's final act is to leave. In the final scene Richard tells Phil that she has gone, moved to a different school, and Phil is left sitting alone in the field. Her absence is powerful because the play is now silent where her voice used to be. Leah

Question number

escapes the group, which suggests that the only moral choice left to her is to remove herself. Yet her departure could also be seen as a failure: she saves herself rather than Adam. Kelly perhaps implies that conscience without action is not enough, but also that refusing to be part of the group is the first step towards being good.

Ultimately, Kelly uses Leah to explore the tension at the heart of human nature. She asks the big questions that the other characters never consider, and she shows that humans can recognise goodness and long for it. But surrounded by fear, loyalty and a powerful leader, her words cannot become actions. Like the bonobo and the chimpanzee, Leah and Phil represent two sides of humanity, and Kelly leaves his audience to decide which side they would choose.

08 Kelly uses Adam to show that bullying is not simply the work of one cruel individual, but a group behaviour in which ordinary teenagers protect themselves by sacrificing the weakest. Adam is the victim at the centre of the play, yet for most of it he is absent, talked about rather than heard. Through this structure, Kelly suggests that victims of bullying are often reduced to objects in other people's stories, and he forces his audience to question how far fear, loyalty and the desire to belong can drive young people to abandon their conscience.

The play opens with Adam already apparently dead. Mark and Jan's clipped, repetitive exchanges, beginning with "Dead?" and the flat reply "Dead.", create shock but also a strange lack of emotion. Their fragmented dialogue reflects the confusion of teenagers who have gone too far but do not yet have the words to face it. Kelly withholds Adam from the stage, so the audience learns about him only through others. This makes the bullying feel like gossip, something passed

Question number

around a group, and it encourages us to notice how little the speakers seem to care about Adam as a person compared with their fear of being caught.

The accounts of Adam's "death" reveal how bullying escalates. The group describe a series of humiliating dares which Adam went along with, and the detail that he kept laughing is deeply uncomfortable. Perhaps he laughed because he wanted so desperately to be accepted that he joined in his own humiliation. This reflects a common pattern in real bullying, where victims try to win approval from their tormentors. The dares culminate at the grille over a disused shaft, where Adam was dared to climb out and stones were thrown at him, causing him to fall. Kelly's use of overlapping, interrupted voices as the story is told shows each character trying to shift blame, and no one takes responsibility. The cruelty seems to have emerged from the group itself rather than from any single plan, which suggests that groupthink can make individuals do things they would never do alone.

Kelly also uses the characters' reactions to Adam to show a range of responses to bullying. John Tate tries to control the group through intimidation, Brian is terrified and tearful, Cathy seems excited by the drama, and Leah talks anxiously but does nothing. Phil, silent and eating, eventually takes over with a calm and logical plan to frame an invented suspect. The stage directions, which often show Phil simply eating while others panic, make his detachment chilling. Kelly suggests that the most dangerous bullies are not always the loudest, but those who can treat other people as problems to be solved.

The tension built by Adam's delayed appearance is released in Act Three when he is discovered alive, living rough in a hedge in the woods. His appearance is shocking: dirty, confused and speaking in fragmented, disordered sentences, he seems no longer sure who he is or whether he is even alive. The trauma of bullying

Question number

has stripped him of his identity. Ironically, Adam has created a kind of peace away from the group, and he does not seem to want to return.

Adam's rediscovery should be a moment of relief, but it becomes the climax of the group's moral collapse. Because an innocent man has been arrested on the basis of their fabricated evidence, Phil decides that Adam must be killed to protect them. Leah protests, but Cathy and Brian take Adam away, and the audience never sees what happens to him. The decision that Adam's life matters less than the group's safety is the logical end of bullying: the victim is treated as disposable. Kelly's restraint in keeping the killing offstage forces the audience to imagine it, making us complicit in the silence.

In the final act, Kelly shows the consequences. Richard tells Phil how the others are coping: some are haunted, others, like Cathy, seem to have thrived. Phil sits alone, refusing to return to the group. The lack of justice for Adam is disturbing, and it reflects how often bullying goes unpunished in real life. Writing for the National Theatre's Connections programme, Kelly creates a play that young people would perform themselves, perhaps so that they would recognise how ordinary teenage behaviour can slide into something monstrous.

Ultimately, Kelly uses Adam to explore bullying as a collective moral failure. Adam is defined by his wish to belong, and he is destroyed by a group that values belonging above everything. By keeping him silent and offstage for so long, Kelly makes the audience feel the injustice of a victim with no voice, and he challenges us to ask what we would do if we were in the woods with them.

09 Pinnock presents the relationships between older and younger characters in Leave

Question number

Taking as difficult because the two generations are, in effect, living in different countries. Enid, Mai and Brod carry Jamaica inside them, while Del and Viv have grown up in London and see themselves as British. The conflicts are painful, but Pinnock suggests that they grow out of love, sacrifice and fear rather than hatred, and by the end she hints that understanding, if not complete harmony, is possible between a migrant generation and the children it has raised.

The most volatile relationship is between Enid and Del. From the opening scene in Mai's flat, Del's rudeness and boredom clash with Enid's anxious desire to appear respectable, and Pinnock's stage directions often show the two women physically turning away from or squaring up to each other. Enid has worked for years in low-paid jobs so that her daughters can have the security she never had, and she measures success in terms of obedience, education and a good name. Del refuses all three. Her pregnancy and her decision to leave home feel to Enid like a rejection of everything she has suffered for. The moment when Enid slaps Del is shocking because it is the physical expression of years of unspoken frustration: Enid's authority, which she believes is a form of protection, can only assert itself through force once words have failed. Pinnock does not make either character simply right; the audience may sympathise with Del's need for freedom and with Enid's terror that her daughter will waste her chances in a society that already sees young black women as failures.

Enid's relationship with Viv is quieter but no less difficult. Viv is the dutiful daughter, studying for her exams with university in view, and Enid pins her hopes for social advancement on her. Yet Pinnock shows that this approval comes at a price. Enid wants Viv to be English in manners and ambitions and has told her little about Jamaica, so Viv feels cut off from her own heritage. When Brod talks to her about Jamaican history and resistance, she becomes hungry for the

Question number

knowledge her mother has kept from her. The difficulty here is not open conflict but silence: Enid's assimilation, a survival strategy for many of the Windrush generation who faced hostility in 1950s and 1960s Britain, leaves her daughter feeling rootless.

Brod complicates the pattern. As the older generation's angriest voice, he rejects England as a country that has never accepted him, and his drinking and bitterness show the damage that racism and disappointment have done. His bluntness with his nieces, and his scorn for Enid's attempts to fit in, create tension in the household, yet he is also the character who gives Viv a sense of pride. Pinnock uses him to show that the older generation is not united: some migrants clung to Englishness, while others clung harder to Jamaica, and the young are caught between these competing versions of who they should be.

Mai's relationships with the young characters are perhaps the most revealing. As an obeah woman she represents the traditional beliefs that Enid both distrusts as a churchgoer and secretly depends upon. Del mocks her at first, but when Del needs somewhere to live it is Mai who takes her in. Pinnock gives Mai her own private grief: her own children have grown up and drifted away, leaving her alone. Her flat therefore becomes a symbolic space where a mother without children and a daughter at war with her mother can find something the other lacks. The use of two settings, Enid's carefully kept home and Mai's more traditional flat, allows Pinnock to contrast the anxious, English-facing respectability of one household with the rooted, Caribbean world of the other.

Language reinforces these divisions. The older characters speak in patois, while the daughters speak London English, so that every conversation dramatises the gap between them. When the young characters struggle to understand, or mock, their

Question number

elders' speech, the audience hears the generational and cultural distance rather than simply being told about it.

The linear structure gradually brings these strained relationships to a crisis. The news of the death of Enid's mother in Jamaica exposes the guilt and loss that Enid has hidden behind her strictness, and Del and Viv begin to see their mother as a daughter herself, one who left her own mother behind. By the final scene, the three women are drawn together in Mai's flat, and the roles of comforter and comforted begin to shift. Pinnock, writing in the 1980s about the first British-born generation of Caribbean families, suggests that the conflict between old and young is not a failure of love but the cost of migration, and that healing begins only when each generation recognises the other's pain.

10 Pinnock presents Enid as a strong mother to a great extent, but her strength is of a particular, brittle kind: it is the strength of endurance and sacrifice rather than of emotional openness. Enid has survived migration, hard work and loneliness to give her daughters a future in Britain, yet the very toughness that has kept the family together also pushes Del and Viv away. Pinnock seems to ask her audience to admire Enid while recognising the cost of the defences she has built.

From the opening scene Enid's strength is clear in her determination to control her family's fate. She takes her daughters to Mai, the obeah woman, because she is anxious about what the future holds, and her insistence that the girls behave politely shows a mother who will not tolerate disrespect. It is significant that a devout churchgoer is willing to visit an obeah woman at all: Pinnock suggests that Enid's love for her family outweighs her own principles, and that she will use any means available to protect them. At the same time, her embarrassment at Del's

Question number

rudeness reveals how much she cares about appearances, which hints that her strength is partly a performance for the outside world.

Enid's hopes are mainly for her daughters. She has worked hard in a society that offered Caribbean migrants little but low-paid labour and frequent hostility, and she pins her ambitions on education. Her pride in Viv's studies, and her hope that Viv will go to university, show a mother who sees learning as the route to the security and respect she was denied. For many of the Windrush generation, the promise of Britain as a "mother country" had turned into disappointment, so Enid's fierce investment in her children's success can be read as a refusal to let that disappointment be passed on. In this sense she is undeniably strong.

However, Pinnock also shows the severity that comes with this strength. Enid's strictness with Del is relentless, and the moment when she slaps her daughter is a dramatic turning point. The physical blow shocks the audience because it exposes the limits of Enid's control: when Del refuses to follow the path laid out for her, Enid has no language left except force. Del's pregnancy and her decision to leave home feel like a defeat to Enid, and her reaction suggests that her strength cannot bend. Through the comments of other characters, especially Del and Brod, Pinnock invites us to see Enid from the outside. Del experiences her mother as cold and controlling, while Brod mocks her efforts to be more English than the English. These perspectives suggest that Enid's strength has, at times, made her rigid and lonely.

Her approach to heritage is another area where her strength is questioned. Enid has kept her Jamaican past largely hidden from her daughters, perhaps believing that assimilation will protect them from racism. Yet this leaves Viv cut off from her roots, so that it is Brod rather than her mother who teaches her about

Question number

Jamaican history. Pinnock implies that a mother's strength can sometimes lie in what she gives up for her children, but that what is given up may be exactly what they need.

The seven-scene structure allows Pinnock to deepen our understanding of Enid as the play progresses. The news that her mother has died in Jamaica breaks through her composure. Enid, who has sent money home and carried the duty of a daughter across an ocean, is revealed as someone who has also been left behind and left others behind. The moments in which she drinks and lets go of her usual restraint are powerful because they are so out of character: the strong mother is shown to be a grieving daughter with her own unhealed wounds. The rather claustrophobic settings, especially Mai's small flat, intensify this sense of a woman who has been holding everything in for too long.

By the end of the play, Enid's relationship with her daughters begins to shift, as Del and Viv see her grief and start to understand the sacrifices she has made. Her strength is not destroyed but transformed into something more human. Ultimately, Pinnock presents Enid as strong in her endurance, her ambition for her children and her loyalty, but not entirely strong as a mother, because she has struggled to show the tenderness behind her toughness. Perhaps Pinnock's point is that strength alone is not enough: what the family needs is for Enid to let her daughters see the vulnerable woman behind the mask, and when she does, their reconciliation becomes possible.

11 Delaney presents Peter as a largely selfish and unpleasant character: a man who uses charm as a tool, wants Helen on his own terms and has no interest in her daughter. However, she also makes him funny, briefly attractive and, at moments,

Question number

almost pitiable, so that the audience understands why Helen is drawn to him. Rather than a simple villain, Peter becomes Delaney's sharp portrait of a type of 1950s masculinity that offers women excitement but no security, and his selfishness matters because of what it reveals about Helen and the cost to Jo.

When Peter first bursts into the shabby Salford flat in Act One, he arrives as a figure of energy and fun. His flirtation with Helen is played almost as a music-hall routine: he pursues, she teases and rejects him, he comes back for more. Delaney, writing for Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, deliberately borrowed these popular comic forms, and the effect is that the audience laughs at Peter rather than with him. His swagger seems slightly ridiculous, especially as he is noticeably younger than Helen, and the eye-patch he wears hints at a damaged past behind the confident surface. At this stage his charm and sense of humour are real, and part of the audience may enjoy his cheek. Yet even here Delaney shows that his attention is entirely fixed on Helen as a prize, and his proposal and the ring he offers feel more like a transaction than a commitment.

Peter's treatment of Jo quickly reveals his selfishness. He regards her as an obstacle, mocks her, and makes it clear that she has no place in the life he imagines with Helen. The realistic, quick-fire dialogue between them is full of mutual hostility, and Jo sees through him more clearly than her mother does. This matters because Peter's arrival accelerates Helen's neglect of her daughter: she leaves Jo to marry him, and Jo is left to spend Christmas with the Boy, who soon disappears too. Delaney structures the first act so that Peter's selfishness has direct consequences. In a decade when the respectable family was idealised in public life, Delaney shows a mother choosing a man over her child, and Peter as the man who expects her to make that choice.

Question number

His unpleasantness becomes most obvious when he returns drunk in Act Two. The comic suitor of Act One has curdled into something uglier. He is rude and contemptuous towards Geof, sneering at him in ways that reflect the widespread homophobia of the late 1950s, when homosexuality was still illegal in Britain. He shows no sympathy for Jo's pregnancy, and his outbursts of temper make the cramped flat feel threatening rather than lively. Drink exposes the aggression beneath his charm, and Delaney seems to suggest that his humour was always a kind of mask. Through his relationships with Helen, Jo and Geof, Peter is revealed as someone who values only his own pleasure.

Peter's attitude to Helen also reflects male expectations of women at the time. He is attracted to her glamour and her willingness to have a good time, but he expects her to be decorative, available and undemanding. When she becomes less useful to him, he discards her, and Helen eventually returns to Jo's flat after Peter has thrown her over for another woman. The comic pursuit of the first act is therefore structurally reversed: the man who chased her so energetically drops her without a backward glance. Delaney exposes the hollowness of Helen's dream that marriage to a younger man with money would bring happiness.

However, there are reasons to qualify the view of Peter as wholly unpleasant. He never pretends to be anything other than what he is, and there is a kind of honesty in his crudeness compared with the polite hypocrisy that Delaney was rebelling against in the drawing-room drama of the time. He also provides Helen with the fun and attention she craves, and she enters the marriage with her eyes partly open, so he is not her only betrayer. Some audiences may even feel a flicker of pity for a man whose bravado seems to cover loneliness and perhaps the scars of war. Delaney rarely allows any of her characters to be purely good or purely bad.

Question number

Overall, though, Delaney presents Peter as selfish and unpleasant to a large extent. His charm is real but shallow, and it hardens into cruelty as the play goes on. Most importantly, he functions as a mirror for Helen's own failings as a parent: in choosing Peter, she chooses selfishness too. By the end, when Helen comes back to the daughter she abandoned, the audience recognises that Peter offered only a brief taste of honey, sweet for a moment and gone, while the real consequences fall on Jo.

12 Delaney presents conflict as the normal texture of life for her characters: they argue, insult and abandon one another, yet they keep coming back together because they have nobody else. In A Taste of Honey conflict grows from poverty, neglect, prejudice and the struggle for power within relationships, and Delaney, a nineteen-year-old from Salford writing in 1958, uses it to expose the gap between the idealised family of post-war Britain and the messy reality of working-class lives.

The central conflict is between Helen and Jo, and it begins the moment they arrive in the cold, rundown flat. Their dialogue is fast, sarcastic and realistic, with insults traded almost as a habit. Helen complains and drinks while Jo mocks her mother's vanity and her lovers. What is striking is that the comedy of these exchanges is part of the conflict: both women use wit as a weapon and a shield. The audience laughs, but the laughter carries pain, because underneath Jo's sharp tongue lies the hurt of a child who has been moved from one lodging to another and never properly cared for. Helen's brief moments of tenderness are quickly undercut by selfishness, so the conflict reflects Delaney's interest in what makes a good or bad parent.

Question number

This conflict is intensified by Peter, whose arrival creates a triangle of hostility. Peter treats Jo as an obstacle and Jo openly despises him, while Helen is pulled between the two. The comic music-hall pursuit of Helen by Peter in the first act turns, by the second, into drunken unpleasantness, and the conflict between Peter and Helen ends with him throwing her over for another woman. Delaney shows how power in relationships shifts: Peter appears to be the one who wants Helen, but by the end she is the one left with nothing. Helen's choice to leave Jo and marry Peter is a structural turning point, because it creates the space in which Jo's relationship with the Boy develops and her pregnancy begins.

Jo's relationship with the Boy is less a conflict than a short-lived love, but Delaney hints at tensions within it. He is a black sailor, and the play quietly registers the prejudice that mixed-race couples faced in 1950s Britain, a decade that saw the Notting Hill riots of 1958. Jo's flippancy about marriage and his eventual departure leave the relationship unresolved, and the conflict it creates is really between Jo and the world, which will judge her as a pregnant, unmarried teenager.

Conflict between Jo and Geof is gentler, but still significant. Jo teases him about his sexuality and sometimes lashes out at him in frustration, while he tries to look after her, preparing for the baby and attempting to make the flat a home. Their bickering often resembles that of an old married couple, and Delaney uses it to suggest that friendship and care can exist outside conventional roles. Yet even this relationship is not free from tension: Jo needs Geof but resents depending on him, and when he tentatively suggests marriage, she cannot accept. Delaney presents conflict here as a symptom of Jo's fear of being loved and then abandoned again.

The most painful conflict comes when Helen returns in the final scene and clashes

Question number

with Geof. Helen sees him as an interloper and pushes him out, and Geof leaves so that Helen can take over. The audience, who has watched Geof's patient kindness, feels the injustice of this. Structurally, Delaney brings the play full circle, with mother and daughter once again alone together. However, when Helen learns that the baby may be black, she goes out for a drink, and Jo is left alone on stage singing a nursery rhyme. This poignant ending suggests that the conflicts of the play are not resolved but simply paused, and that the cycle of neglect may continue into the next generation.

The settings sharpen all of these conflicts. The cramped, shabby flat, with its cold rooms and grim industrial surroundings, is a backdrop that makes escape impossible: characters cannot avoid each other, so tensions boil over. Delaney also uses music and direct address to the audience, influenced by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, which reminds us that this is a performance and invites us to judge what we see rather than simply sympathise.

Overall, Delaney presents characters in conflict as people trapped by circumstances they cannot control: poverty, prejudice, and the expectations placed on women and men. The conflicts are often funny, sometimes cruel, but always human, and Delaney's achievement is to show that, for Helen and Jo, conflict is almost a form of intimacy, the only language in which they can express their need for each other.

13 Golding presents the changing relationship between Ralph and Jack as a microcosm of the conflict between civilisation and savagery, and between democracy and dictatorship. Their relationship moves from wary respect to open rivalry and finally to murderous hatred, and Golding, writing in 1954 after serving

Question number

in the Second World War, uses this decline to show how easily the desire for power can overwhelm the structures that hold a society together.

At first, the relationship is built on mutual admiration, although tension is present from the beginning. When the boys gather, Jack declares that he should be chief "with simple arrogance", listing his status as head boy and chorister. The adjective "simple" suggests that his sense of entitlement is unthinking, the product of a hierarchical public-school world in which authority is inherited rather than earned. Ralph wins the vote largely because he holds the conch, and Golding makes the conch an early symbol of democratic order. Significantly, Ralph's first act as chief is to offer Jack command of the choir, saying "Jack's in charge of the choir." This is a diplomatic gesture which shows Ralph's instinct for fairness, and for a time it works: the two boys explore the island together, sharing a sense of excitement and companionship. Golding even suggests a kind of shy liking between them, which makes their later enmity more tragic.

The first real fracture comes in the shelter-building scene, where Ralph complains that the hunters are not helping and Jack insists that meat is more important. Golding's narrator observes that they walked along as "two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate." The metaphor of continents is significant: it implies that the gap between them is vast and geological, and perhaps it also hints at the division of the world into rival blocs during the Cold War. Ralph thinks of rescue, shelter and the long term; Jack thinks only of the hunt and the immediate thrill of killing.

This division explodes in Chapter Four, when Jack's hunters let the signal fire go out just as a ship passes. Ralph's bitter "There was a ship" is met by the hunters' triumphant chant, "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood." The violent,

Question number

rhythmic triplet shows the hunters' growing intoxication with violence, while Ralph's plain statement shows his focus on rescue. When Jack strikes Piggy and breaks his glasses, Golding shows that Jack's resentment of Ralph is being displaced onto the weakest boy. The painting of Jack's face is also crucial: the mask becomes "a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." Golding suggests that the mask allows Jack to escape the civilised conscience which still binds Ralph.

As the novel progresses, the conflict becomes a struggle for power. At the assembly in Chapter Five, Jack rejects the rules entirely, and Ralph's insistence that the rules are all they have shows how fragile democratic order is. In Chapter Eight, Jack attempts to overthrow Ralph, asking who thinks Ralph should not be chief. When nobody supports him, he declares "I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you." The childish language of "play" is ironic: what begins as a game becomes deadly serious. Jack forms his own tribe at Castle Rock, and the boys gradually defect to him, lured by meat, feasting and the security of a strong leader. Golding reflects his own disillusionment with human nature after witnessing the rise of fascism, showing how easily people abandon reason for the comfort of a powerful leader.

The final stages show the relationship collapsing into violence. When Ralph insists "I'm chief. I was chosen", he appeals to the democratic process, but by now that appeal means nothing. Jack throws his spear at Ralph, and during the confrontation Roger kills Piggy and the conch "exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist." The destruction of the conch symbolises the end of any shared authority between Ralph and Jack. In the last chapter, Jack orders a manhunt for Ralph and sets fire to the island, so that Jack's desire for power becomes literally destructive of the world they share.

Question number

Golding's ending complicates the relationship further. When the naval officer arrives, Jack is reduced to a small, painted boy, and Ralph "wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart". The officer himself belongs to a warship engaged in an adult war, which suggests that the rivalry between Ralph and Jack is not simply childish but a mirror of the conflicts between grown nations. Ultimately, Golding presents their changing relationship as a fable about the fragility of civilisation, showing that the desire to dominate, embodied in Jack, can overpower the reason and fairness represented by Ralph.

14

Golding uses Simon to a great extent to explore ideas about goodness, presenting him as the one boy whose kindness and insight are natural rather than imposed by rules. Yet Golding's view of goodness is bleak: Simon's goodness is real but isolated, misunderstood and ultimately destroyed. Through him, Golding, who had witnessed the cruelty of the Second World War, suggests that goodness exists in human nature but is fragile and unable, on its own, to save a society from its own darkness.

From early in the novel, Simon's goodness shows itself through quiet acts of care for the weak. When the littluns cannot reach the fruit, Simon "found for them the fruit they could not reach", and Golding's simple, rhythmic sentence suggests that his kindness is instinctive and unshowy. Unlike Ralph, whose goodness is bound up with duty and rescue, or Piggy, whose goodness is rooted in adult reason, Simon helps simply because others need help. His concern extends to Piggy, the boy most mocked by the others: when Jack refuses to give Piggy meat, Simon passes him his own share, an act which earns him Jack's scorn. Golding presents goodness here as a form of self-sacrifice.

Question number

Golding also shows Simon's goodness through his relationship with nature. In Chapter Three, he retreats to a secluded glade surrounded by candle buds, a place of beauty and stillness. The image of the candle buds, with their quasi-religious associations, suggests a holy space, and Simon's withdrawal resembles that of a hermit or prophet. This is one of several ways in which Golding builds Simon as a Christ-like figure: he is gentle, solitary, wise and eventually sacrificed. In a novel often read as an allegory, Simon may represent the spiritual or saintly side of humanity, in contrast to Jack's savagery and Piggy's scientific rationalism.

However, the most important aspect of Simon's goodness is his insight. At the assembly about the beast, he suggests that "maybe it's only us." This is the novel's central truth, that the evil the boys fear lies within themselves rather than in some external monster, yet Simon is laughed at and shouted down. Golding's narrator explains that Simon is "inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness." The phrase "essential illness" reflects Golding's belief that evil is part of human nature, and the irony is that the boy who understands it best is the one least able to make himself heard. Golding implies that goodness and wisdom are often dismissed by societies that prefer simple answers.

Simon's encounter with the Lord of the Flies is the turning point of his story. The pig's head, swarming with flies, speaks to him in a voice that mocks the idea of a beast that could be hunted and killed. Its claim to be "part of you" confirms Simon's insight, and the head warns him that the others will do him harm. Golding uses foreshadowing here: the threat is fulfilled almost immediately. Yet Simon's response shows the strength of his goodness. Rather than running away, he climbs the mountain, discovers that the beast is only a dead parachutist, and, in a final act of compassion, frees the body from the tangled lines before setting

Question number

off to tell the others the truth.

His death is the most powerful example of how Golding uses Simon to explore the limits of goodness. Stumbling into the frenzied dance, Simon is mistaken for the beast and killed by the boys, who chant "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" The chant has shifted from pig to beast, and Golding suggests that violence has now turned on a human being. The tragic irony is that the boy bringing the truth about the beast is destroyed by the beast within the others. Even Ralph and Piggy, the representatives of civilisation, take part, and their later denials show how easily good people can participate in evil. Golding then describes Simon's body being carried out to sea, surrounded by luminous creatures and beneath the "steadfast constellations." This lyrical, almost reverent prose is in stark contrast with the savagery of the killing, and it suggests that Simon's goodness is honoured by the natural world even if it was rejected by humanity.

Nevertheless, Golding uses Simon to explore goodness only to a certain extent, because his goodness has no lasting effect. After his death the island descends further into violence, with Piggy murdered and Ralph hunted. Simon's insight dies with him. Perhaps this is Golding's point: in an allegory written in the shadow of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, he suggests that goodness exists but is too gentle and too rare to defeat the "essential illness" of humanity. Simon therefore represents not the triumph of goodness but its vulnerability.

15 In 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and 'A Family Supper', Lawrence and Ishiguro present characters dealing with loss as people who discover that they never truly knew the person they have lost. For Lawrence's Elizabeth Bates, grief becomes a shattering moment of self-recognition; for Ishiguro's narrator and his father, loss is

Question number

buried beneath silence and ritual. Both writers suggest that death exposes the emotional distances within families, and that the deepest losses are not only of a person but of the chance to understand them.

Lawrence builds Elizabeth's experience of loss gradually, so that grief arrives first disguised as anger. As she waits for her husband Walter to come home from the pit, her irritation is expressed through sharp dialogue with her children and her assumption that he is drinking in the pub. The tension builds through the long evening: the meal spoils, the children are put to bed, and her anger slowly turns to fear. Lawrence, himself the son of a Nottinghamshire miner, draws on the hardships of mining families in the early twentieth century, where poverty, drink and the constant danger of the pit shaped every marriage. Elizabeth's isolation in the cottage, waiting in the dark, reflects the position of women whose lives depended on men they could not control.

The chrysanthemums are the central symbol of Elizabeth's loss. She tells her daughter that it was "chrysanthemums when I married him, and chrysanthemums when you were born", and she associates them with the first time he came home drunk. The flowers, traditionally linked with funerals, gather together the key moments of her marriage, so that its beginning and its decay are connected. Lawrence uses them to foreshadow Walter's death, but also to suggest that the marriage itself had been slowly dying long before the accident.

The emotional climax comes when Walter's body is carried in. He has been suffocated by a fall of rock, and the image of suffocation in the darkness of the pit mirrors the airless, unspoken nature of the marriage. As Elizabeth and her mother-in-law wash the body, Lawrence moves into Elizabeth's consciousness, and the narrative voice reveals the depth of her realisation. She sees "how utterly

Question number

inviolable he lay in himself", and understands that they "had met in the dark and had fought in the dark, not knowing whom they met nor whom they fought." The repetition of "dark" links the pit, the night and their failure to know each other. Her real loss, Lawrence suggests, is not just of her husband but of the marriage they never truly had. Her shame is powerful because it is a private moral reckoning: "Life was her immediate master. But from death, her ultimate master, she winced with fear and shame." The poignant ending leaves her returning to the practical duties of life, with the children and the unborn baby she is carrying, while carrying a grief that is as much guilt as sorrow.

Ishiguro's 'A Family Supper' presents loss in a very different, restrained way. The narrator returns to Tokyo from California after the death of his mother, who died from eating fugu, a fish that is poisonous if prepared incorrectly. Ishiguro's first-person narration is controlled and emotionally detached, and the narrator rarely says what he feels. This restraint is itself a way of dealing with loss: the family protect themselves through politeness and avoidance. The father speaks of his former business partner Watanabe, who killed himself and his family after their firm failed, and the father's admiration for him as a man of principle hints at a traditional Japanese code of honour that makes his own grief harder to express.

The tension in Ishiguro's story comes from what is left unsaid. The father has lost his business, his wife and, in a sense, his son, who left after a quarrel and has lived abroad. When the father prepares supper and serves fish, the reader is left uncertain whether he intends the family to share Watanabe's fate. The narrator's memory of a ghostly woman in the garden adds to the atmosphere of haunting, as if the dead are still present in the house. Unlike Elizabeth's dramatic recognition, the ending is ambiguous, and the characters remain sealed off from each other,

Question number

suggesting that this family's loss cannot even be fully spoken.

Both writers, therefore, present loss as something that exposes the failures of communication within families. Lawrence gives Elizabeth a powerful, almost painful clarity at the end, while Ishiguro denies his characters, and his readers, any such release. Perhaps Lawrence's story suggests that loss can lead to truth, however devastating, whereas Ishiguro's suggests that some losses are absorbed into silence. In both, the dead remain strangers, and the living are left to reckon with the distance they allowed to grow.

16 In 'Korea' and 'The Darkness Out There', McGahern and Lively present conflict between generations not as open argument but as a hidden moral gulf that the young suddenly glimpse. In both stories a young person discovers that an older figure, apparently familiar and safe, is capable of something cold and shocking. The conflict is therefore one of revelation: the younger generation's innocence is broken by what the older generation has done, or is willing to do, and both writers suggest that this knowledge marks the painful passage into adulthood.

McGahern opens 'Korea' with the father's anecdote about an execution he witnessed as a young man during the Irish struggle for independence. Crucially, the story is told by the son as an older man looking back, so the father's memory is filtered through the son's own. This layered narrative suggests that memories are inherited and reshaped over time. The father's account is vivid and disturbing, and it shows that the older generation has been marked by violence. Hearing it on an ordinary fishing trip creates a jarring contrast between past horror and present routine. McGahern hints from the beginning that the father's experiences have hardened him in ways the son does not yet understand.

Question number

The eel-fishing trip is described with careful physical detail: the boat, the lines, the son's tasks. The relationship between father and son is conveyed through brisk, practical dialogue, mostly instructions and short replies, suggesting a bond built on shared work rather than emotional openness. This restraint is typical of the rural Ireland of the 1950s in which McGahern grew up, where fathers often held authority without explanation. McGahern's own relationship with his father, a police sergeant, was notoriously difficult, and the story's tension may reflect that personal history.

The true conflict emerges when the son overhears his father talking to Mr Farrell about Luke Moran, a local young man who emigrated to America and was killed fighting in Korea, after which his family received a large sum of money. The son realises that his father is weighing up the advantages of sending him to America in the same way, calculating that even his death might bring profit. This overheard conversation is the story's climax, and McGahern makes it more painful by having the son learn it secretly rather than in confrontation. The conflict between generations becomes a betrayal: the father, who once shuddered at the killing of a young man, now seems prepared to sacrifice his own son. The son's silence afterwards, and the way he begins to watch his father with new detachment, suggests a bond that cannot be repaired. The contrast between the river and the distant war reflects how, in rural Ireland, emigration was often the only escape from poverty.

Lively's 'The Darkness Out There' explores a similar shock of revelation, though between a teenage girl and an elderly woman rather than a parent and child. Sandra and Kerry visit Mrs Rutter through a Good Neighbours scheme, and at first Sandra sees her as a cosy, harmless old lady. Lively uses Sandra's limited

Question number

perspective to create dramatic irony: the reader senses something unsettling in Mrs Rutter's sweetness long before Sandra does. Sandra's real fear is of Packer's End, the wood she associates with childhood stories of danger, but the true darkness is inside the cottage.

The conflict comes into the open when Mrs Rutter tells the story of the German airman whose plane crashed in the wood during the war. She and her sister left him to die over a long period, refusing to help him, and she justifies it as "tit for tat" for the death of her husband in the war. The casual, almost cheerful way she recounts this shocks the teenagers, and the brutal ordinariness of her language makes her cruelty more horrifying. Kerry's angry reaction and his decision to leave show the younger generation rejecting the moral values of the older one. Sandra, too, is transformed: she realises that the darkness she feared was never really in the wood but within people, and that appearances can be deeply deceptive.

Both writers therefore present conflict between generations as a loss of innocence. McGahern's son and Lively's Sandra both learn that adults whom they trusted can be cold and calculating, and both stories end with the young character carrying this unwelcome knowledge. However, there are differences. In 'Korea' the betrayal is personal, aimed at the son himself, so the conflict is more intimate and lasting. In 'The Darkness Out There' the conflict is moral rather than personal, and the young characters can walk away, though not without being changed. In both, the older generation has been shaped by war, and both writers suggest that the violence of the past continues to poison the present.

17 On the surface, Animal Farm seems to prove that no society can ever be truly equal: the farm begins with exploitation under Jones and ends with exploitation

Question number

under the pigs, so the story appears to come full circle. However, I would argue that Orwell does not present inequality as inevitable. As a democratic socialist writing in 1943 and 1944, he presents equality as a genuine ideal which is betrayed by a power-hungry minority and allowed to fail by a majority who do not question them. His warning is not "equality is impossible" but "equality must be defended".

Orwell opens the novel with a clear picture of inequality. Mr Jones is "too drunk to remember" to shut the pop-holes, and the animals are worked hard and fed little while the humans take the profit. Old Major's speech gives this injustice a voice: "Our lives are miserable, laborious, and short." The blunt tricolon sounds almost like a slogan, presenting the animals' suffering as a political problem rather than a natural law. Major's claim that "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing" is a clear allegory of Marx's idea that the ruling class lives off the labour of the workers. At this point equality is presented as both desirable and possible.

Indeed, the period immediately after the Rebellion suggests that a fairer society can exist. The animals destroy the whips and the harness, the harvest is "an even bigger success" than they had hoped, and the Seven Commandments end with the simple declaration "All animals are equal." Orwell's narrative voice is warm here, almost pastoral, and the description of the animals enjoying food that is truly their own shows that equality brings real happiness.

However, Orwell plants the seeds of inequality almost at once. The milk disappears and the windfall apples are taken by the pigs, and Squealer justifies this by calling the pigs "brainworkers" who need the food for the good of everyone. The threat that "Jones would come back" if the pigs failed silences any objection. Here Orwell shows how inequality returns, not by force at first but through language. The pigs

Question number

are cleverer and literate, and they use that advantage to turn knowledge into power. This could support the view that some inequality is unavoidable, since abilities differ, yet Orwell suggests the real problem is that the clever exploit the trusting rather than serve them.

The gradual rewriting of the Commandments is perhaps Orwell's most powerful structural method. "No animal shall sleep in a bed" gains "with sheets", and "No animal shall drink alcohol" gains "to excess". Each small addition is easy to miss, just as the animals miss it, and the reader is placed in the uncomfortable position of noticing what the characters cannot. The process ends with the single commandment "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." The paradox is absurd, but its absurdity is the point: Orwell satirises the way Soviet propaganda continued to speak the language of equality while Stalin's party lived in privilege and the people starved.

The ending seems to confirm the statement most strongly. Napoleon restores the name "The Manor Farm", the pigs walk on two legs, and Pilkington jokes that "If you have your lower animals to contend with, we have our lower classes!" The final image, in which the animals look "from pig to man, and from man to pig" until "it was impossible to say which was which", creates a circular structure in which the revolution has achieved nothing. Benjamin's cynical belief that hunger and hardship are "the unalterable law of life" seems, at this moment, to be the voice of truth.

Yet Benjamin is not presented as a hero. He can read as well as any pig, yet he stays silent for years and only cries out when the knacker's van is already taking Boxer away, far too late to save him. His refusal to act until then makes him complicit. Orwell suggests that inequality survives because of passivity as much as power: Boxer's maxims "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right" show

Question number

how loyalty without questioning lets tyranny grow. Orwell later explained that the moral of the book was that revolutions only bring lasting change if the people stay alert and are prepared to remove leaders who betray them.

Therefore, I only partly agree. Orwell certainly shows that societies tend towards inequality when power is concentrated and unchallenged, a lesson he had learned in Spain, where he saw Stalinist forces turn on their own allies. But the novel's bitterness comes from the sense that equality was possible and was stolen. Animal Farm is less a proof that equality cannot exist than a warning to its 1945 readers about what happens when people stop guarding it.

18 Orwell presents Napoleon as the chief architect of the revolution's failure: from his first appearance he wants power rather than equality, and he is prepared to use propaganda, terror and murder to keep it. However, Orwell is careful not to let him carry all the blame. As an allegory of Stalin's Soviet Union, Animal Farm suggests that a tyrant needs helpers and a passive population, so the failure belongs to Napoleon most of all but also to the system of fear and ignorance that allows him to rule.

From the opening chapters Orwell signals danger. Napoleon is introduced as "a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar", "not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting his own way". The adjective "fierce-looking" and the phrase "getting his own way" suggest a will to dominate rather than to serve, and his silence contrasts with Snowball's energetic speeches. Orwell implies that Napoleon is not interested in ideas at all, only in results that benefit himself. Even his early decision to take the puppies away and make himself "responsible for their education" is presented in innocent language, yet it is a chillingly patient act: he is

Question number

secretly raising a private army.

The expulsion of Snowball is the moment when Napoleon's responsibility becomes undeniable. During the debate on the windmill, nine enormous dogs burst into the barn and chase Snowball off the farm. Orwell structures this scene as a sudden shift from democracy to dictatorship: the Sunday debates are abolished, and decisions are now made by a committee of pigs presided over by Napoleon. This mirrors Stalin's removal of Trotsky in the 1920s. Napoleon then claims the windmill as his own idea, showing that he has no principles to betray, only rivals to remove.

Napoleon's power depends on manipulating language, and here Orwell spreads the responsibility. Squealer, who "could turn black into white", is the voice of the regime, endlessly explaining away hardship with statistics and the threat that Jones will return. The sheep drown out any objection by bleating "Four legs good, two legs bad". The Commandments are quietly altered, so that "No animal shall kill any other animal" gains the words "without cause". These changes are Napoleon's will, but they are carried out by others, and Orwell may be suggesting that a dictator is only as strong as the propaganda machine that serves him.

The executions in Chapter 7 show Napoleon at his most ruthless. Animals confess to imaginary crimes and are killed on the spot until there is a pile of corpses at his feet. Orwell's flat, unemotional narration makes the horror worse, and the scene clearly echoes Stalin's show trials of the 1930s. Napoleon gives the orders, but the dogs tear out the throats, and the other animals watch and then huddle together on the knoll, unable to find the words for what has gone wrong. Clover's thought that this was not what they had hoped for when they rebelled shows the ordinary animals realising, too late, how far the revolution has fallen.

Question number

Perhaps the most damning evidence against Napoleon is his treatment of Boxer. Boxer's loyalty, summed up in "Napoleon is always right" and "I will work harder", is exploited until his body breaks, and then he is sold to "Alfred Simmonds, Horse Slaughterer and Glue Boiler". Napoleon, who has said nothing of substance throughout the novel, allows Squealer to invent a touching deathbed scene. Here Orwell shows a leader with no conscience at all, turning the farm's most devoted worker into money for whisky.

However, the structure of the novel suggests that the failure is gradual and shared. The pigs together take the milk and apples in Chapter 3, long before Napoleon becomes a dictator, which suggests that the corruption begins with the whole ruling class, not one individual. Benjamin can read but refuses to warn anyone until it is too late, and Boxer's blind trust strengthens the regime he helps to build. Orwell later wrote that revolutions only work if the people are alert and know how to remove their leaders. In this sense, the animals' failure to question is part of the tragedy.

By the end, Napoleon walks on two legs with a whip in his trotter and dines with humans, until the animals cannot tell "which was which". The circular structure makes him the agent who returns the farm to where it began. So Orwell presents Napoleon as overwhelmingly responsible, the embodiment of how power corrupts idealism, but he also warns his 1945 readers that a Napoleon can only succeed where others are too frightened, loyal or indifferent to stop him.

19 De Waal presents Maureen as the person who gives Leon what his mother cannot: steady, unconditional care. She is not glamorous, perfect or even related to him, yet she becomes the emotional centre of his life. Through her, de Waal explores

Question number

the idea that love is shown through daily acts of attention rather than blood ties, and she challenges a 1980s care system which too often treated children like Leon as harder to place and easier to overlook.

To understand Maureen's importance, de Waal first shows what Leon has lost. In the opening chapters, nine-year-old Leon is effectively the parent in his home. After Jake is born, Carol retreats to her bed, and Leon is the one who changes nappies, makes bottles and works out how to stretch the money. The present tense narration traps the reader in each moment with him, so that we experience his anxiety as it happens rather than looking back from safety. Because the third-person narration stays close to Leon's limited understanding, there is painful dramatic irony: the reader can see that Carol is depressed and the household is collapsing, while Leon simply tries harder to hold it together. His childhood has been taken from him before Maureen ever appears.

When the boys are taken into care, Maureen is presented as Carol's foil. Where Carol is absent and fragile, Maureen is solid, talkative and practical. She fills the house with food, television and routine, and Leon, used to hunger and silence, gradually begins to relax. De Waal often lets Maureen's opinions and sayings enter Leon's thoughts, as he repeats what Maureen says about the world. This technique shows how her voice becomes part of his inner life: she is shaping the way he thinks in the same way a parent would. Her bodily size and appetite, which Leon notices with a child's frankness, become symbols of abundance and comfort after the emptiness of his life with Carol.

However, Maureen cannot protect Leon from the decision that defines the novel. Jake, a white baby, is adopted quickly, while Leon, an older mixed-race boy, is left behind. De Waal, who worked in family law and on adoption panels, exposes the

Question number

racism in a system where, as the social workers' conversations reveal, children like Leon were seen as harder to place. Maureen's importance grows at exactly this point, because she is the one adult who does not pretend that the separation is fine. She sees Leon's grief and anger, and although she cannot reverse what has happened, she refuses to give up on him. De Waal suggests that her love is valuable precisely because the system around her is so cold.

The meeting between Leon, Maureen and Carol is significant because it places the two mother figures side by side. Carol is so consumed by her own loss that she cannot really see her son, while Maureen is watchful and protective. Leon's narration is loyal to his mother, and he wants to believe she will come back for him, but the reader understands what he cannot yet admit: that Carol is unable to care for him. Leon's role as an unreliable narrator creates sympathy, as his hope makes the gap between his view and the adults' view even sadder.

Maureen's hospitalisation is the structural crisis that proves how much she matters. Once she is taken ill and Leon is sent to stay with her sister Sylvia, his world becomes unstable again. His rucksack, packed with things for Jake and the money he saves, becomes a symbol of his fear that he will always have to be ready to leave. He steals, lies and drifts towards the allotments and the adults he meets there, such as Tufty, which shows how vulnerable he becomes without her. His visits to the hospital, and his fear that she might die, reveal a depth of attachment he has not been able to put into words.

By the end of the novel, Leon is back with Maureen, and Sylvia, once brusque, has become part of the family that holds him. The ending is not a fairy tale: Leon still longs for Jake and still carries the damage of his early years. Yet de Waal ends with a sense of tentative safety, suggesting that a child's life can be rebuilt

Question number

through patient, ordinary kindness. Maureen is important, therefore, not because she replaces Carol, but because she shows Leon, perhaps for the first time, what it is like to be looked after. De Waal uses her to argue that family is something people choose to create, and that every child, whatever their colour or age, deserves someone who chooses them.

20 In My Name Is Leon, de Waal presents loyalty as something a child gives freely and fiercely, often to people who cannot return it. Leon's loyalty to Jake and to Carol drives the plot, but the novel gradually suggests that true loyalty is not about blood: it is shown by those who stay. Through Leon's journey, de Waal explores how a child learns whom to trust in a world, and a care system, that keeps letting him down.

From the opening, Leon's loyalty to his baby brother is total. When Jake is born, Leon is the one who feeds him, soothes him and watches over him while Carol slips into depression. The present tense and the close third-person narration, which only ever shows Leon's thoughts and feelings, make this devotion immediate: we experience his pride and his exhaustion moment by moment. His simple, child-like vocabulary creates a tone of innocence, yet the responsibilities he carries are those of an adult. De Waal may be suggesting that loyalty is forced on children like Leon too early, when the adults around them fail.

Leon is also loyal to Carol, even when she neglects him. He hides how bad things are, covers for her, and continues to believe that she will get better and come back for both boys. Because the narration stays inside his limited understanding, there is dramatic irony: the reader can see what Leon refuses to see, that his mother is unable to cope. This makes his loyalty both admirable and heartbreaking.

Question number

When Jake is adopted and Leon is left behind, his promise that he will one day get his brother back becomes the centre of his life. His rucksack, packed with saved money and things for Jake, is a symbol of that promise, a loyalty he carries on his back everywhere he goes.

De Waal contrasts this with the system's lack of loyalty to Leon. As an older, mixed-race boy in early 1980s Britain, he is passed over while the white baby is quickly placed with a new family. De Waal, who worked in family law and on adoption panels and is herself of mixed Irish and Caribbean heritage, exposes how race decided which children were wanted. Social workers come and go, and their promises often mean little. This failure makes the loyalty of individuals all the more precious.

Maureen is the clearest example of an adult who earns Leon's loyalty by being loyal to him first. She feeds him, talks to him and stands by him when he is angry and grieving. At first Leon is wary, as his loyalty belongs to Carol, but structurally the novel traces his slow shift in trust towards Maureen. When she is taken into hospital, his fear of losing her shows how deeply he has come to depend on her. Her sister Sylvia, gruff and impatient at the start, also proves loyal when it matters, taking Leon in and gradually softening. De Waal suggests that loyalty can grow between people who were once strangers.

The allotments introduce a different kind of loyalty, between Leon and Tufty. Tufty treats Leon with respect and patience, teaching him about growing things, and he also represents loyalty to a community: he is a Black man angry about the way the police treat young Black men, and his politics hint at the tensions which erupted in the riots of 1981. Through Tufty, Leon starts to see himself as part of something bigger than his broken family, which links loyalty to questions of race

Question number

and identity. In contrast, Mr Devlin's hostility shows that not every adult can be trusted, and Leon has to learn to tell the difference.

Flashbacks and memories of life with Carol remind the reader that Leon's original loyalties have not disappeared even as new ones form. This structure shows the painful process of growing up: Leon does not stop loving Jake and Carol, but he learns that he can belong somewhere else too. De Waal also uses foreshadowing, building a sense that Leon may do something reckless to keep his promise to Jake, which makes the reader fear for him.

By the end, Leon is back with Maureen and Sylvia, and while he still longs for Jake, he is held by people who have proved themselves. De Waal's message seems to be that loyalty is a powerful force for a child, but it must be met by adults who are loyal in return. The novel asks its readers to consider how many children like Leon were let down by a system that did not stand by them, and it celebrates the ordinary people who did.

21 Syal presents Anita Rutter as powerful, but only from a certain angle. To the young Meena she is dazzling, fearless and in control of the whole yard; to the adult narrator looking back, and to the reader, she is a neglected girl whose power is borrowed from cruelty and from other people's fear. Through this double perspective, Syal explores how a child mistakes dominance for strength, and how growing up means seeing through it.

Anita's power is established early, and it is largely the power of the gaze. The younger, lonelier Meena is desperate to be noticed by the older girl who rules the yard, and Syal's first-person narration conveys how overwhelming Anita seems.

Question number

Anita decides who belongs, who is mocked and who is dismissed, and her gang, including Sherrie and Fat Sally, follow her lead. When Anita chooses Meena as a companion, Meena feels singled out and honoured. Syal's retrospective narration, however, adds a layer of irony: the adult Meena knows that she was being used, even as the child Meena revels in the attention. In this sense, Anita's power depends on Meena's longing to escape her own sense of difference as the only Punjabi child in a white mining village.

Anita's power is also shown through her influence over others' behaviour. She encourages Meena to lie, to swear and to steal, and Meena's growing rebellion against her parents is closely tied to her wish to impress her friend. Syal presents Anita's broad Black Country dialect and blunt insults as a kind of social armour, a confident language that Meena tries to copy. Through this, Syal shows the pull of belonging: Meena wants to become one of the Tollington girls rather than the dutiful daughter of educated Indian parents. The episodic structure lets us see this influence across many small incidents, building a picture of Anita as the centre around which Meena's childhood world turns.

Yet Syal undermines Anita's power by revealing her home background. Her mother Deirdre is careless and cold, and when she eventually leaves the family, Anita's confidence visibly crumbles. Her treatment of her younger sister Tracey, and Tracey's own fear and neglect, show that the Rutter household offers little warmth. Syal contrasts this with Meena's family, whose gatherings of aunties and uncles are full of food, music and affection. In a novel concerned with family values, the reader comes to understand that Anita's bullying could be a way of controlling a world in which she has no real control. Her power is therefore partly a mask for vulnerability.

Question number

The darkest side of Anita's power appears in her association with Sam Lowbridge and his friends. As racism grows in Tollington, from Sam's hostile outburst at the Spring Fete to the attack on an Indian man, Anita aligns herself with the people who reject Meena's very existence. Her careless enjoyment when she talks about the violence is chilling, and it is a turning point in their friendship. Set in the late 1960s, in the years after Enoch Powell's notorious speech in Birmingham, these scenes expose how ordinary community life could turn into hostility towards families like Meena's. Anita's power here is ugly: it is the power to wound by choosing sides.

However, Syal ultimately shows that Meena outgrows Anita. After Meena's accident and her time in hospital, where she forms a gentler friendship with Robert, and after the arrival of her grandmother Nanima, Meena begins to value her Indian heritage and her own voice. Her final break from Anita, and her choice to stop inventing stories to please other people, marks a moment of moral independence. As a bildungsroman, the novel traces Meena's growth away from the girl she once idolised, and the tone shifts from excited admiration to sad clarity. By the time Meena passes her eleven-plus and leaves Tollington, Anita seems to be left behind, trapped in a village and a way of life that is changing around her.

Therefore, Syal presents Anita as powerful only within the narrow world of the yard, and only in the eyes of a child who wanted her approval. Her power is real in its effects, since she shapes Meena's behaviour and causes genuine hurt, but it is shallow and fragile at its root. Syal, drawing on her own childhood in a village near Wolverhampton, seems to suggest that true strength lies not in dominating others, but in the self-knowledge and sense of identity which Meena finally gains and Anita never does.

Question number

22

Syal uses Tollington as a small world in which the large changes of late 1960s Britain can be seen up close. The village is a fading mining community, tight-knit and familiar, but also suspicious of change; and as new roads, new people and new attitudes arrive, its old certainties begin to crack. Through Meena's recollected narrative, Syal presents Tollington with both affection and honesty, suggesting that society was changing in ways that brought both opportunity and fear.

Meena's early impressions of Tollington show a place rooted in the past. It is a village of terraced houses, outside toilets, a shared yard and a single shop, where everyone knows everyone else's business. The pit that once gave the village its identity has closed, and Syal suggests that a working-class community has lost its purpose and is unsure what will replace it. For Meena, though, it is also a place of freedom and adventure, and the adult narrator's nostalgic tone captures the warmth of characters such as Mrs Worrall next door. By beginning with this affectionate picture, Syal makes the later changes feel like real losses as well as gains.

The Kumars themselves represent change. As the only Punjabi family in the village, they bring a different language, food and culture, and Syal shows how Tollington responds with a mixture of kindness, curiosity and hostility. Some villagers welcome them, while others show casual racism in the form of careless comments and assumptions. Meena's narration often records these moments with the confusion of a child and the sharper understanding of the adult looking back, so the reader sees both how ordinary prejudice felt at the time and how damaging it was. Through her parents' gatherings with other Indian families, who mostly live in nearby towns, Syal also shows a new community forming alongside the old one.

The wide range of characters in the village allows Syal to present a broad picture

Question number

of a society in transition. Anita and her family represent a struggling white working class, with Deirdre's neglect and eventual departure suggesting that family life is breaking down. Mr Ormerod's chapel and shop stand for an older, respectable Christianity, which is kindly but often patronising in its interest in faraway countries. Sam Lowbridge represents a younger, angrier generation that has no jobs and no future and turns its frustration into racial hatred. Syal's episodic structure moves between these figures, building a mosaic of a community that is both united and divided.

The Spring Fete is a key moment in which Tollington's changing attitudes come into the open. What should be a celebration of community becomes the setting for Sam's public outburst against people like the Kumars, which shocks some villagers and quietly pleases others. Later, the attack by Sam and his friends on an Indian man shows that words have turned into violence. Writing about the years after Enoch Powell's notorious 1968 speech in Birmingham, Syal shows that the national mood was reaching even the smallest village. Tollington becomes a microcosm of a country deciding whether to accept or reject its new citizens.

The building of the new motorway is perhaps Syal's clearest symbol of change. It cuts through the countryside around the village, promising connection and progress, but it also threatens to swallow the old way of life. Some villagers welcome the jobs and development, while others resent the loss of the fields and the sense of isolation that made Tollington feel safe. Like the motorway, the social changes of the period bring Tollington closer to the wider world whether it wants them or not.

By the end of the novel, Tollington is no longer the place Meena first described. Anita's family has broken up, the yard is emptier, and Meena, who has passed her eleven-plus, is leaving to attend grammar school and move to a new house. Her

Question number

grandmother Nanima's visit has also given her a stronger sense of her Indian identity, so she leaves with a clearer understanding of who she is. The ending therefore suggests that change can be painful but also liberating. Syal, who grew up in a village near Wolverhampton, presents Tollington not as a simple place of racism or of community, but as a society caught between the past and the future, in which a girl like Meena can finally find her own place.

23 In Pigeon English, Kelman presents violence as a force that seeps into every corner of Harrison's world, shaping how children speak, play, dress and dream. Harri himself is cheerful, curious and full of wonder, but the violence around him slowly closes in until it destroys him. Inspired partly by the killing of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000, Kelman uses an innocent child narrator to show how a community becomes used to violence, and how heavy the cost of that acceptance is.

The novel opens in medias res, with Harri and his friends looking at the blood of a boy who has been stabbed to death outside a chicken shop. This dramatic opening places violence at the heart of the story from the first page, yet Harri's reaction is not horror so much as fascination. His first-person, demotic voice, with its playful slang such as "asweh" and "hutious", mixes the shocking with the everyday, and this clash is deeply unsettling for the reader. Kelman suggests that for children growing up on the estate, death has become something to stare at and talk about rather than something unimaginable.

Harri's response to the murder is to become a detective. With his friend Dean he collects evidence, watches suspects and tries to lift fingerprints, imitating crime shows on television. This game shows his refusal to accept the boy's death as

Question number

normal, which marks him out from many of the adults and teenagers around him, who seem resigned to it. Yet it is also dangerous, as the boys' investigation draws them closer to the very people responsible. Kelman uses dramatic irony here: the reader understands far more clearly than Harri how serious the threat is, and our fear grows as he treats it as an adventure.

The Dell Farm Crew show the effect of violence on young people in the community. X-Fire and his friends present violence as something to be proud of, a way of earning respect and protecting their status. Their robberies and vandalism, and their power over younger children, show how violence becomes a route to identity for boys who have little else. Kelman explores ideas about masculinity: to be a man on the estate seems to mean being willing to hurt others. Harri is drawn to the Crew because he wants to belong and to be seen as brave, and his attempts to prove himself show how even a gentle child can be pulled towards that world.

Violence also affects Harri's family. His mother works long hours and constantly worries about her children's safety, while his sister Lydia is drawn into the circle of older girls such as Miquita, whose cruelty includes burning Lydia. Harri's father and baby sister are still in Ghana, and the hope of reuniting the family gives the novel a painful sense of what is at stake. Kelman shows that violence does not only harm those who are stabbed or robbed; it also fills families with fear, divides siblings and forces children to grow up too quickly. The love within Harri's family is shown as a source of warmth, yet it cannot shield him from the dangers outside.

The pigeon, which speaks in short italic sections, offers a different perspective on the violence. It watches over Harri and comments on human behaviour with a mixture of tenderness and sorrow. This structural device creates a sense of fragility

Question number

and fate, as if Harri is being watched by something that already knows how his story will end. The novel is also divided into months, which builds a growing sense of inevitability as time passes and the danger around Harri increases.

The ending fulfils this sense of doom. Harri is stabbed, and he dies on the estate in the same way as the boy whose death he set out to investigate. The circular structure is devastating: the child who refused to accept violence as normal becomes its next victim. His final moments, narrated in his own voice, are full of the same innocence and love for his family that have defined him throughout, which makes the loss almost unbearable for the reader.

Through Harri's death, Kelman forces readers to confront what happens when a community stops being shocked by violence. The effects he presents are not only physical but emotional and social: fear, the loss of childhood, and the slow destruction of hope. By telling the story through the eyes of an eleven-year-old immigrant who sees London as a place of possibility, Kelman makes the reader feel the injustice of a society that cannot protect its children, and asks us to care about the lives that are too often reduced to headlines.

24 Kelman presents Miquita as genuinely frightening, a teenage girl whose cruelty and loyalty to the Dell Farm Crew make her one of the most dangerous people in Harri's world. Yet because we only ever see her through the eyes of an eleven-year-old boy, she is also strange, glamorous and sometimes unexpectedly vulnerable. I would argue that Kelman presents her as largely threatening, but uses her to explore how gang culture shapes girls as well as boys, rather than simply as a villain.

Question number

At first, Harri sees Miquita with a mixture of admiration and confusion. She is older, confident, and part of the group of girls that his sister Lydia wants to belong to, along with Chanelle. Harri's naive narration notices her looks and her attitude rather than her danger, and his innocent, demotic voice, full of his playful slang, softens her presence. This creates dramatic irony: the reader recognises before Harri does that Miquita's world is not safe. Kelman uses the repeated teenage slang of her speech, sharp and insulting, to make her sound tough and adult, which is part of what makes her threatening to a younger child.

Her relationship with Killa, a member of the Dell Farm Crew, ties her to the violence at the heart of the novel. Miquita is fiercely loyal to the Crew, and through her Kelman shows that girls are not outside gang culture but play their own roles within it. She enforces its rules, defends its reputation and shares its contempt for anyone weaker. This loyalty is frightening because it overrides any sense of right and wrong: the Crew comes before friendship or kindness.

Miquita's treatment of Lydia is the clearest sign of her cruelty. When she burns Lydia, Kelman reveals that her friendships are based on power and fear rather than affection. Lydia, desperate to fit in, is hurt by the very girl she looked up to, and Harri's protective love for his sister makes this moment especially disturbing for the reader. Her vicious fight with Chanelle reinforces this, showing that Miquita's violence can be turned on her own friends at any moment. Kelman structures the novel so that her behaviour becomes progressively more violent, mirroring the growing danger around Harri.

The most troubling incident is her sexual assault of Harri, in which she uses her age and power over him. Harri describes it with confused, childlike language, and this is what makes it so uncomfortable: he does not fully understand what is

Question number

happening, but the reader does. Kelman shows how power is abused not only through knives and fights but through humiliation and control. Here Miquita is at her most threatening, because she exploits his innocence directly.

However, Kelman also complicates her. We are given almost no back-story for Miquita and no explanation for why she behaves as she does. This absence is significant: she could be read as a product of the same environment that produces the boys of the Dell Farm Crew, an environment of poverty, inequality and a lack of opportunity on the estate. There are hints that she is trapped too, dependent on Killa and on the status the Crew gives her. Some readers may feel that her aggression is a form of self-protection in a place where showing weakness is dangerous. Her hardness might therefore be seen as a mask, much like the Crew's posturing.

Kelman's use of Miquita also links to ideas about assimilation. Lydia, like Harri, has come from Ghana and wants to belong in London, and Miquita represents one version of belonging: tough, streetwise and willing to hurt others. The novel's title, Pigeon English, suggests a language and identity pieced together from what is around you, and Miquita is part of what Harri and Lydia are learning from. Through her, Kelman warns about the cost of fitting in when the culture you are joining is built on violence.

Overall, Kelman presents Miquita as a frightening and threatening character, perhaps the most immediately menacing figure in Lydia's and Harri's daily lives. Yet he refuses to make her a simple monster. By denying her a full story, he invites readers to wonder what has made her this way, and to recognise that she, like Harri, is a young person shaped by a community that has failed to protect its children. She is frightening, but she is also a warning about what that community

Question number

produces.

25 Both Heaney in 'Follower' and Armitage in 'Mother, any distance' present growing up as a painful but inevitable reversal of the bond between parent and child. Each poet looks back at the moment a child begins to separate from the parent who once seemed all-powerful, yet neither presents growing up as a clean break: Heaney ends haunted by a father who now depends on him, while Armitage ends suspended between the security of home and the frightening freedom of adulthood. Both poems suggest that growing up does not end a relationship; it changes who holds the power within it.

Heaney presents the child's feelings first through heroic admiration. The father's "shoulders globed like a full sail strung" uses a nautical simile to make him seem vast, rounded and driven by a natural force, and the single-word sentence "An expert." has the blunt finality of a child's verdict. The technical vocabulary of "wing", "sock" and "headrig" shows the adult poet reconstructing the farming world precisely, perhaps as a tribute to a skill he himself never inherited. Armitage, by contrast, begins not with awe but with practical need: "Mother, any distance greater than a single span / requires a second pair of hands." The direct address makes the poem feel intimate and conversational, and the measuring of "windows, pelmets, doors" grounds the moment of leaving home in an ordinary domestic task. Where Heaney's father is mythologised, Armitage's mother is simply there to help, which suggests that the speaker is already further along the road to independence.

Both poets use the image of a line or path to explore the tension between dependence and freedom. In 'Follower' the child is literally following the furrow, stumbling "in his hob-nailed wake", and the word "wake" extends the sailing

Question number

metaphor: the boy is tossed about in the trail his father leaves behind. The ambition "I wanted to grow up and plough" is undercut at once by "All I ever did was follow / In his broad shadow round the farm", where "shadow" suggests the child is overshadowed, unable to step into the light of his own identity. Armitage transforms this line into the tape measure, an extended metaphor for the umbilical connection between mother and son. The enjambment of "the line still feeding out, unreeling / years between us" makes the lines themselves stretch across the page, and the minor sentences "Anchor. Kite." capture the paradox beautifully: the mother keeps him safe, but she also holds him back from flight.

Structure is central to how both poets present growing up. Heaney's six regular quatrains, with their steady iambic rhythm and regular half-rhyme, mimic the even, controlled movement of the plough, perhaps reflecting the order and certainty of the father's world. Yet the final stanza breaks this pattern with a dramatic volta: "But today / It is my father who keeps stumbling / Behind me". The verb "stumbling" was once the child's, and now the roles are reversed. Armitage uses a loose sonnet form with only occasional rhyme, which could suggest a love poem whose conventions are being stretched, just as the tape is stretched. His lines grow longer as the speaker moves away, and the poem rises vertically "to breaking point, where something / has to give", the half line isolating the moment of strain.

The endings reveal different feelings about what growing up costs. Heaney's last line, "and will not go away", is ambiguous. It may express guilt, as the poet, who left farming for writing, feels his ageing father as a burden, or it may be tender, showing that his father's influence remains a permanent part of him. For a reader aware that Heaney grew up on a farm in County Derry and chose poetry over the land, the poem becomes a meditation on inheritance and the identity he partly rejected. Armitage leaves his speaker poised at "a hatch that opens on an endless

Question number

sky / to fall or fly". The alliteration and the stark alternative capture the exhilaration and terror of independence, while "your fingertips still pinch / the last one-hundredth of an inch" shows the mother refusing to let go entirely. The precise measurement suggests how fragile, but how real, the final connection is.

Ultimately, both poems present growing up as a shift in power and responsibility. Heaney looks back with admiration, guilt and a sense of reversed roles, while Armitage captures the threshold itself, uncertain but hopeful. Together they suggest that a child may move beyond a parent's shadow or reach, but never entirely outside it.

26 Both Owen in 'Exposure' and Heaney in 'Storm on the Island' present conflict not as a heroic clash between armies but as a struggle against an invisible, overwhelming force that leaves people powerless. In 'Exposure' the real enemy is not the Germans but the weather, the waiting and the slow death of faith; in 'Storm on the Island' the enemy is the storm itself, though Heaney's military language invites us to read it as a metaphor for a wider political conflict. Both poets suggest that the most frightening conflict is the one you cannot see or fight back against.

Owen immediately presents nature as the true aggressor. In "the merciless iced east winds that knive us" the wind is personified as a soldier with a blade, and the neologism "knive" turns a noun into a violent action, as if the weather is bayoneting the men. Heaney also personifies nature as an attacker, but builds towards it more gradually. His opening, "We are prepared: we build our houses squat", is confident, with the colon suggesting calm, practical certainty. By the middle of the poem, though, the wind "dives / And strafes invisibly", verbs taken

Question number

from aerial warfare, and "Space is a salvo" uses sibilance to create the hiss of incoming fire. In both poems the military lexis transfers to nature, but where Owen's men have no defence from the start, Heaney's islanders begin secure and slowly realise their vulnerability.

The idea that conflict is defined by waiting and emptiness links the poems powerfully. Owen's refrain "But nothing happens" closes four of the eight stanzas, and its flat, deflated rhythm contrasts with the long, heavy lines before it, creating anticlimax that mirrors the boredom and despair of trench life. The ellipses in the opening stanza, "the night is silent ...", stretch time and suggest exhausted minds drifting. Heaney's climax is similarly built on absence: "We are bombarded by the empty air. / Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear." The oxymoron "huge nothing" echoes Owen's "nothing happens": in both, the fear is of something formless. Yet the effect differs. Owen's "nothing" is the cruel stalemate of war, where men freeze while nothing is achieved, whereas Heaney's "nothing" is an unseen menace, perhaps the threat of violence building in a community before it erupts.

Both poets use sound to make the reader feel the conflict. Owen's half-rhymes, such as "knive us" and "nervous", or "wire" and "war", are unsettling because they never quite resolve, reflecting a world that is out of joint. The sibilance of "Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence" imitates the whistle of bullets, but Owen then states that they are "Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow", so the human enemy becomes almost irrelevant. Heaney instead uses a single block of blank verse, conversational in tone ("as you can see"), which makes the poem sound like a speaker reassuring a visitor, until the simile "spits like a tame cat / Turned savage" breaks the line at the turn, showing how something familiar can become hostile in an instant.

Question number

Context deepens the ideas in each poem. Owen drew on his experience of the brutal winter of 1916 to 1917 on the Western Front, when many men suffered and died from exposure and frostbite, and he deliberately rejects the patriotic tradition of glorious death. The rhetorical question "What are we doing here?" challenges the purpose of the war, and the haunting stanza in which "our ghosts drag home" only to find "on us the doors are closed" suggests that the soldiers have been abandoned by the home they fight for. Most bitterly, "For love of God seems dying" implies that faith itself is a casualty. Heaney's poem, published in 1966 in 'Death of a Naturalist', describes the harsh life of an exposed island community, but its language of bombardment has led many readers to link it to the growing tensions in Northern Ireland that would explode into the Troubles. Some have noted that "Storm on the Island" sounds very like "Stormont", the seat of Northern Ireland's government, so the poem may quietly warn about political violence.

Finally, the endings present different attitudes to conflict. Owen's last stanza shows the burial party pausing over "half-known faces" and declares "All their eyes are ice", a chilling metaphor that freezes both the dead and the living into emotional numbness, before the refrain returns with crushing finality. Heaney ends on fear rather than death, but his "huge nothing" is equally bleak because it cannot be resisted. Ultimately, both poets strip conflict of glory: Owen exposes the futility of war for the individual soldier, while Heaney shows a community bracing itself against a force that it cannot see, control or escape.

27 Both Eliot in 'In a London Drawingroom' and Wordsworth in 'Lines Written in Early Spring' present places as forces that shape not only how people live but how they feel and think. Eliot's industrial London drains life of colour, individuality and joy,

Question number

while Wordsworth's grove fills the speaker with a sense of harmony that links "the human soul" to nature. Yet both poems are ultimately critical of what people have made of their world: Eliot condemns the city as a "prison-house", and Wordsworth, surrounded by beauty, laments "What man has made of man". Places, for both poets, reveal the damage humanity does to itself.

Eliot opens by showing how the city corrupts even the sky. "The sky is cloudy, yellowed by the smoke" uses a sickly colour to suggest that nature has been polluted by human industry, and the verb "yellowed" implies a gradual staining, as if London is slowly poisoning its own air. Wordsworth's opening is the opposite: "I heard a thousand blended notes, / While in a grove I sate reclined". The word "blended" suggests harmony, and the relaxed posture of "reclined" shows that the natural place allows the speaker rest and contemplation, something entirely missing from Eliot's restless city. However, even here Wordsworth admits that "pleasant thoughts / Bring sad thoughts to the mind", so the beauty of the place sharpens, rather than removes, his awareness of suffering.

The poets differ most sharply in how places affect what people can see and imagine. Eliot's view is blocked by "the houses opposite / Cutting the sky with one long line of wall". The violent verb "Cutting" makes architecture an aggressor, and the simile "Like solid fog" creates a paradox: something that should be formless has become an impenetrable barrier. The phrase "Monotony of surface & of form / Without a break to hang a guess upon" suggests that the city starves the imagination, leaving the mind nothing to wonder about. Wordsworth's place, by contrast, overflows with life that invites speculation: "And 'tis my faith that every flower / Enjoys the air it breathes." The personification of the flowers and the language of "faith" reflect the Romantic belief, central to 'Lyrical Ballads' in 1798, that nature is alive and spiritually nourishing. Where Eliot's people cannot even

Question number

"hang a guess", Wordsworth confidently guesses at the "thrill of pleasure" in the birds' motion.

Eliot develops her critique by showing that the city dehumanises its inhabitants. "No figure lingering / Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye" uses a metaphor of starvation, implying that people are emotionally malnourished, and the enjambment across "lingering / Pauses" ironically creates the pause that no one in the city takes. People "hurry on & look upon the ground", and even the transport is described as "All closed, in multiplied identity", suggesting that industrial life produces sameness and isolation, as if mass production has extended to human beings. Wordsworth's people are absent from his grove, which is significant: the place is joyful precisely because it is untouched by society. His refrain-like return to "What man has made of man" at the end of two stanzas suggests that human society, perhaps the poverty, war and inequality of the 1790s, is the true source of unhappiness.

Form and structure reinforce these effects. Eliot writes in a single block of unrhymed verse, with no stanza breaks, which mirrors the "one long line of wall" and the relentless monotony she describes. Her use of the ampersand ("surface & of form", "colour, warmth & joy") gives the poem the feel of a hurried private note, mirroring the rushed life of the city. Wordsworth uses regular quatrains with an alternating rhyme scheme, a gentle, balladic form that echoes the order and harmony he finds in nature. However, his final stanza turns to a conditional: "If this belief from heaven be sent, / If such be Nature's holy plan". The repeated "If" introduces doubt, and the closing rhetorical question "Have I not reason to lament" ends the poem on sorrow rather than celebration.

The endings show how strongly places can determine people's lives. Eliot's final

Question number

image, "The world seems one huge prison-house & court / Where men are punished at the slightest cost", presents the city as a system of justice gone wrong, where people are sentenced to live without "colour, warmth & joy". The economic language of "lowest rate" and "cost" suggests that industrial Britain has reduced happiness to a calculation. Wordsworth ends with a lament, but his poem still holds out hope that nature offers a model of how life could be.

Overall, Eliot presents an urban place that imprisons and diminishes people, while Wordsworth presents a natural place that uplifts the individual but exposes, by contrast, the failures of human society. Both poets suggest that the places we build reflect, and reinforce, the way we treat one another.