

Poem	Subject Matter	Context	Key Quotations / Devices	Links to other Poems
Ozymandias <i>Shelley</i>	The narrator meets a traveller who tells him about a statue standing in the middle of the desert. It's a statue of a king who ruled over an ancient civilisation. An inscription on the statue arrogantly boasts of how powerful the king was. However the statue has fallen down and only ruins remain.	Shelley was a Romantic poet. Romanticism was an art/literature movement of the late 1700s/early 1800s. Romantic poets believed in emotion over reason and wrote about the power of nature. Shelley also disliked monarchies, absolute power and the oppression of ordinary people.		
London <i>Blake</i>	The narrator describes a walk round London. He says everywhere he goes, the people are affected by misery and despair. No one can escape the relentless misery. People in power (like the Church, monarchy, landowners) seem to be behind the problems and do nothing to help the people in need.	Published in 1794. Blake wrote poetry that explored the human soul. <i>London</i> comes from his collection, Songs of Experience, which looked at how innocence is lost and how society has been corrupted.		
The Prelude <i>Wordsworth</i>	The extract begins on a summer evening when the narrator finds a boat and takes it out onto a lake. Initially the narrator enjoys the beautiful scenery but then a mountain appears on the horizon and the narrator is scared of its size and power. He turns the boat around and goes home, haunted by the experience for days after.	Wordsworth was a Romantic poet. Like other Romantic poetry, this extract explores the connection between nature and human emotion. It considers how human identity and character is shaped by experiences.		
My Last Duchess <i>Browning</i>	The Duke proudly points out a portrait of his former wife to a visitor. He explains that he was angered by the Duchess's friendly behaviour to others and was annoyed she treated him like everyone else. He strongly hints that he had her murdered. The Duke and his guest walk away and the reader discovers the visitor is arranging the Duke's next marriage.	The Duke of Ferrara was a real person. In 1561, his wife – Lucrezia – died in suspicious circumstances. There were rumours she was poisoned. This probably inspired Browning to write his poem. It was published in 1842.		
The Charge of the Light Brigade <i>Tennyson</i>	The poem describes a disastrous battle between British cavalry and Russian forces during the Crimean War (1853-56). A misunderstanding meant that the Light Brigade were ordered to advance into a valley surrounded by enemy soldiers. Only armed with swords, the British soldiers fought bravely but without much hope against the Russian forces and their guns. Many of them were killed.	Alfred Tennyson was a Victorian poet. He wrote this poem in 1854 as a tribute to the real life soldiers of the Light Brigade who died in the battle it describes.		
Exposure <i>Owen</i>	WW1 soldiers in trenches, stay awake at night, fearing an attack. However, nature seems to be their main enemy – it's freezing cold, windy and snowing. The men imagine returning home but doors are closed to them. They believe sacrificing themselves at war is the only way to keep loved ones safe. They return to thinking about their death.	Wilfred Owen was WW1 soldier. He wrote Exposure from the trenches and not long before he was killed in battle. A lot of Owen's poetry revealed his anger at the war's waste of life and its horrific conditions.		
Storm on the Island <i>Heaney</i>	The narrator describes how a community is well prepared for a coming storm. AS the poem continues, the confidence starts to disappear as the storm develops. The power and sounds of the storm are described. The ending of the poem describes the fear as the storm hits the island.	Seamus Heaney was a Northern Irish poet and this poem was published in 1966. Some believe the storm described hints at the 'storm' in Northern Ireland of violent political disturbances relating to the Republicans' wish for independence from Britain.		

