

POWER

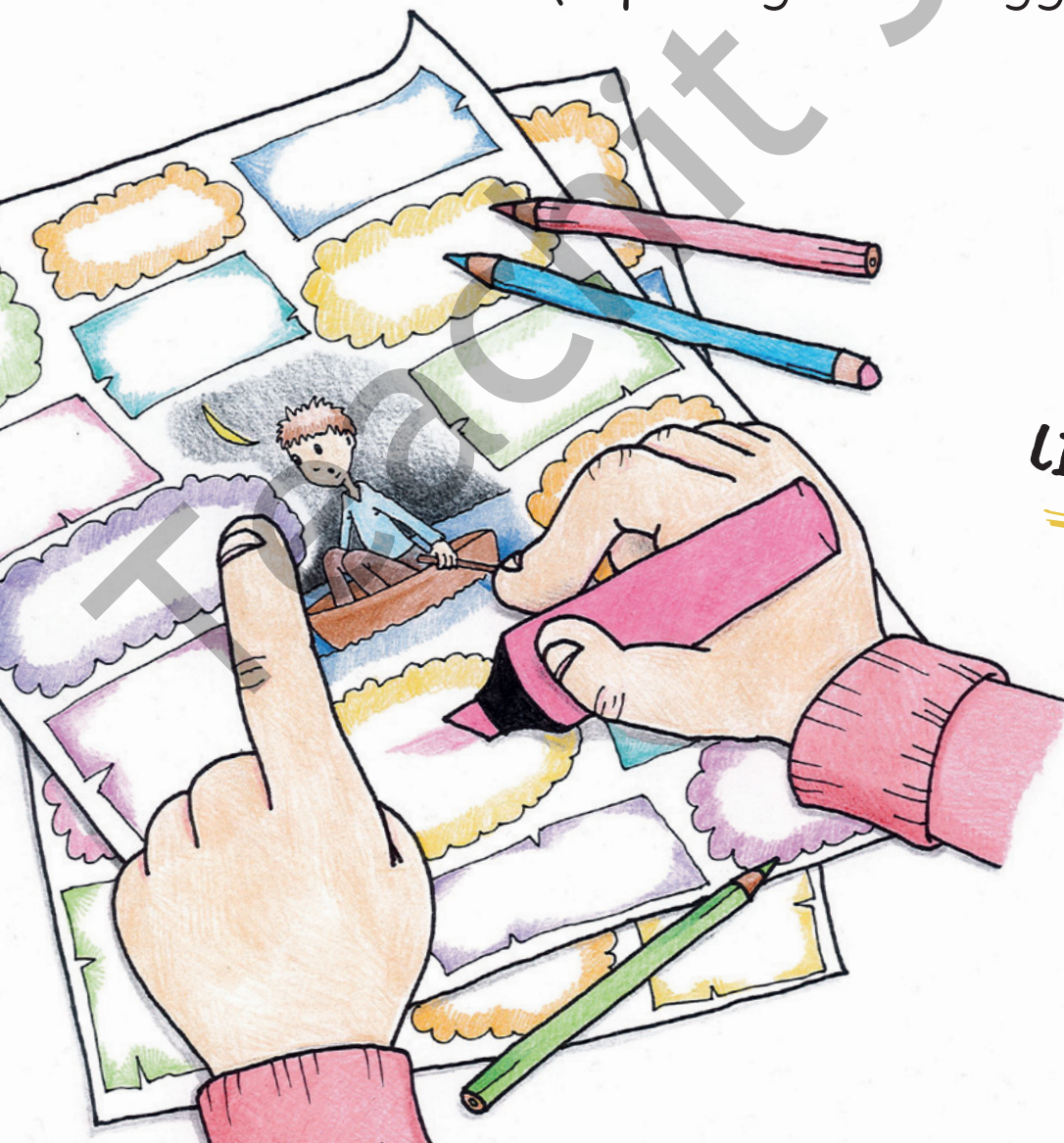
and

CONFLICT

STUDENT REVISION

AQA poetry anthology

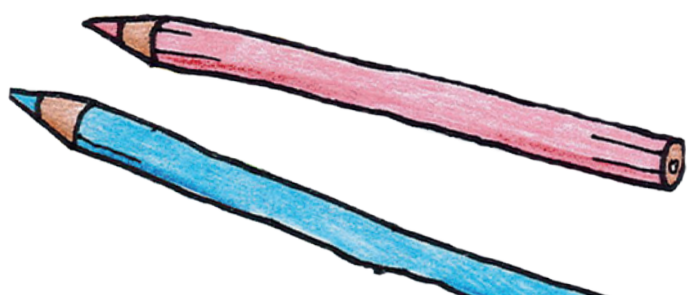
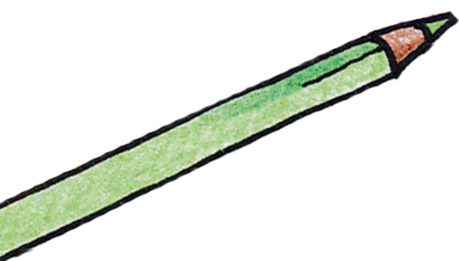
GCSE ENGLISH
LITERATURE 9-1



POWER and CONFLICT

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INTRODUCTION







These revision notes and activities will support your revision of the 'Power and conflict' poetry cluster for the AQA English Literature GCSE (Paper 2 Section B). There is a set of detailed, illustrated notes for each poem followed by some activities to recap, extend and deepen your understanding. Some selected answers are available at the back.

- There are 15 poems in the 'Power and conflict' cluster of the anthology.
- You should revise all the poems and be prepared to write about any of them in your exam.
- In this exam, you will be given one of the poems from the anthology. This poem will be printed in the exam paper.
- You will be asked to compare this poem to one of your choice from the 'Power and conflict' cluster.

AN OVERVIEW OF THEMES

	POEM	POET	THEMES - KEY WORDS AND PHRASES
	'Ozymandias'	Percy Bysshe Shelley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human power • Nature's destruction of power • Oppression • Pride
	'London'	William Blake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class • Inequality • Lack of power • Oppression • Poverty • Social structures
	Extract from 'The Prelude'	William Wordsworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood • Fear • Memory • Personal experience • Power of nature

	POEM	POET	THEMES - KEY WORDS AND PHRASES
	'My Last Duchess'	Robert Browning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Male power • Power within marriage • Social position
	'The Charge of the Light Brigade'	Alfred Lord Tennyson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bravery • Duty • Reality of conflict • Sacrifice • War
	'Exposure'	Wilfred Owen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brutality of nature • Effects of conflict • Futility of war • Reality of conflict • War
	'Storm on the Island'	Seamus Heaney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • Conflict between man and nature • Fear • Isolation • Power of nature
	'Bayonet Charge'	Ted Hughes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict • Direct experience of conflict • Nature • Violence • War
	'Remains'	Simon Armitage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of war • Guilt • Memories • Responsibility • Violence

	POEM	POET	THEMES - KEY WORDS AND PHRASES
	'Poppies'	Jane Weir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of war • Family • Grief • Memory • Mother's perspective
	'War Photographer'	Carol Ann Duffy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and the media • Desensitisation • Effects of conflict • Horror of war
	'Tissue'	Imtiaz Dharker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Identity • Religion • Society • Transience
	'The Emigrée'	Carol Rumens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging • Effects of conflict • Freedom • Identity • Loss and absence
	'Checking Out Me History'	John Agard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Education • Identity • Multiculturalism • Pride
	'Kamikaze'	Beatrice Garland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blame and forgiveness • Childhood • Family • Loyalty • Memories • Reminiscence • Self-sacrifice

EXTRACT FROM THE PRELUDE

Wordsworth was a **ROMANTIC POET**, who wrote about nature's power and mankind's place within nature.

The extract tells the true story of the young Wordsworth who stole a boat and rowed on Lake Ullswater. At first he felt proud and confident, but a huge mountain appeared and the power of nature terrified him. Visions of the mountain haunted him.

Written in **BLANK VERSE**. The poem has **NO RHYME SCHEME**, but follows an **IAMBIC PENTAMETER RHYTHM**. This may reflect the subject matter. The lack of rhyme scheme may reflect the freedom when rowing, or the free movement of nature. The tightly controlled rhythm may reflect the regular rhythm of the oars, or the ever-present control of nature.

Frequent **ENJAMBMENT**, perhaps reflecting how Wordsworth has little control (he is compelled by nature) and is overwhelmed, or reflecting the flow of water or freedom of nature.

Wordsworth uses long, rambling **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** with frequent **CAESURAE** and **SUBORDINATE CLAUSES**. This creates a sense of confusion and being overwhelmed and breathless - making the reader share Wordsworth's feelings.

The poem is an **EXTENDED METAPHOR** for mankind's actions and nature's power. Mankind is selfish and proud (he steals the boat, feels the way he affects light on the lake is beautiful and is "proud of his skill"). Humans feel we have power and a right to dominate nature: but mankind has little true power and little understanding of nature and its great power.



PERSONIFICATION is used to describe nature (he is "led by her") and the boat which has a "usual home and is referred to as "her".

The "huge peak" is also brought to life, but is monstrous and referred to as "it". It has a mind of its own ("As if with voluntary power instinct, upreared its head")... it is "grim" and "like a living thing", and "with a purpose of its own... strode after" Wordsworth.

A **SIMILE** describes the boat as an "elfin pinnacle". A pinnacle is a sailing ship, and elfin means "like an elf". This simile shows the pride and arrogance Wordsworth first felt when rowing: his small boat became a mythical sailing ship in his mind. It later becomes just "my bark" - fragile and weak against nature.

Although these aspects of nature "do not live / Like living men" they have a strength and power that surpasses mankind. Realising his own lack of power perhaps terrifies him the most.

REPETITION is used in "a huge peak, black and huge". It is as though **EVOCATIVE** language has deserted him because he is in awe of nature.

Positive and negative **SEMANTIC FIELDS** accentuate the change in mood. At first, words relate to light, peace and confidence ("pleasure", "glittering", "melted", "sparkling light", "unswerving", "like a swan"). They become dark, forceful and imposing ("black and huge", "struck and struck", "grim", "towered", "strode", "trembling", "darkness", "solitude", "desertion"). This links to the extended metaphor: the initial proud confidence of mankind and then nature's eventual dominance.

EXTRACT FROM 'THE PRELUDE' Revision activities



1

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGn1Ilx_3o4

Watch this YouTube video, in which Akala discusses the extract from the poem with other poets. Then write your own script to accompany a film or PowerPoint presentation explaining what you feel the poem is about. You could work with a friend to create a script showing a discussion of the poem between two students. Make the film/PowerPoint presentation and perform your analysis to other students who are revising the poem!

2

Sort the following nine statements from most to least important, using the diamond-nine grid (see next page for grid).

The narrator is shocked when he sees the huge mountain because he was not expecting its size and power.

The experience of seeing the mountain looming over him affected Wordsworth for a long time afterwards.

The narrator feels so powerful in the boat that it becomes an almost mythical or legendary experience.

Experiences in his childhood helped to mould Wordsworth's beliefs about humanity and the world when he was an adult.

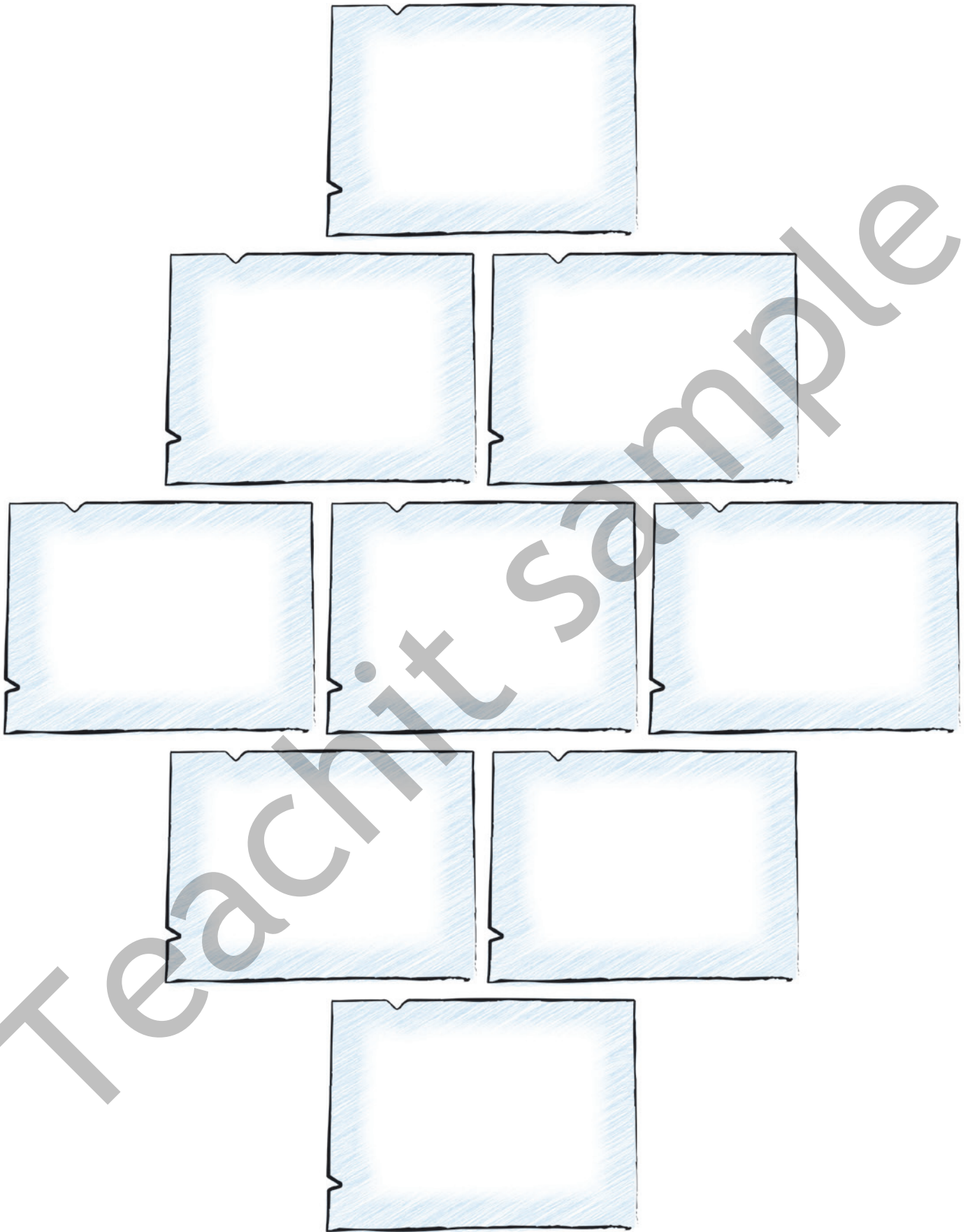
The narrator feels an inner conflict and guilt when he steals the boat.

The poem highlights nature's awe-inspiring power and the way in which mankind has no true understanding of nature.

The poem highlights mankind's pride and arrogance and our false belief that we have a right to exert power over nature.

The narrator feels a level of pride as he sets off rowing across the lake.

It is only on reflection that the adult Wordsworth truly understands the significance of what happened to him on the lake.



3

Write a short paragraph to support each of the top six points from the diamond-nine grid.

4

How could you discuss the extract from 'The Prelude' in terms of the following themes? Note down any key ideas, opinions or quotations which you could use in an essay.

FEAR

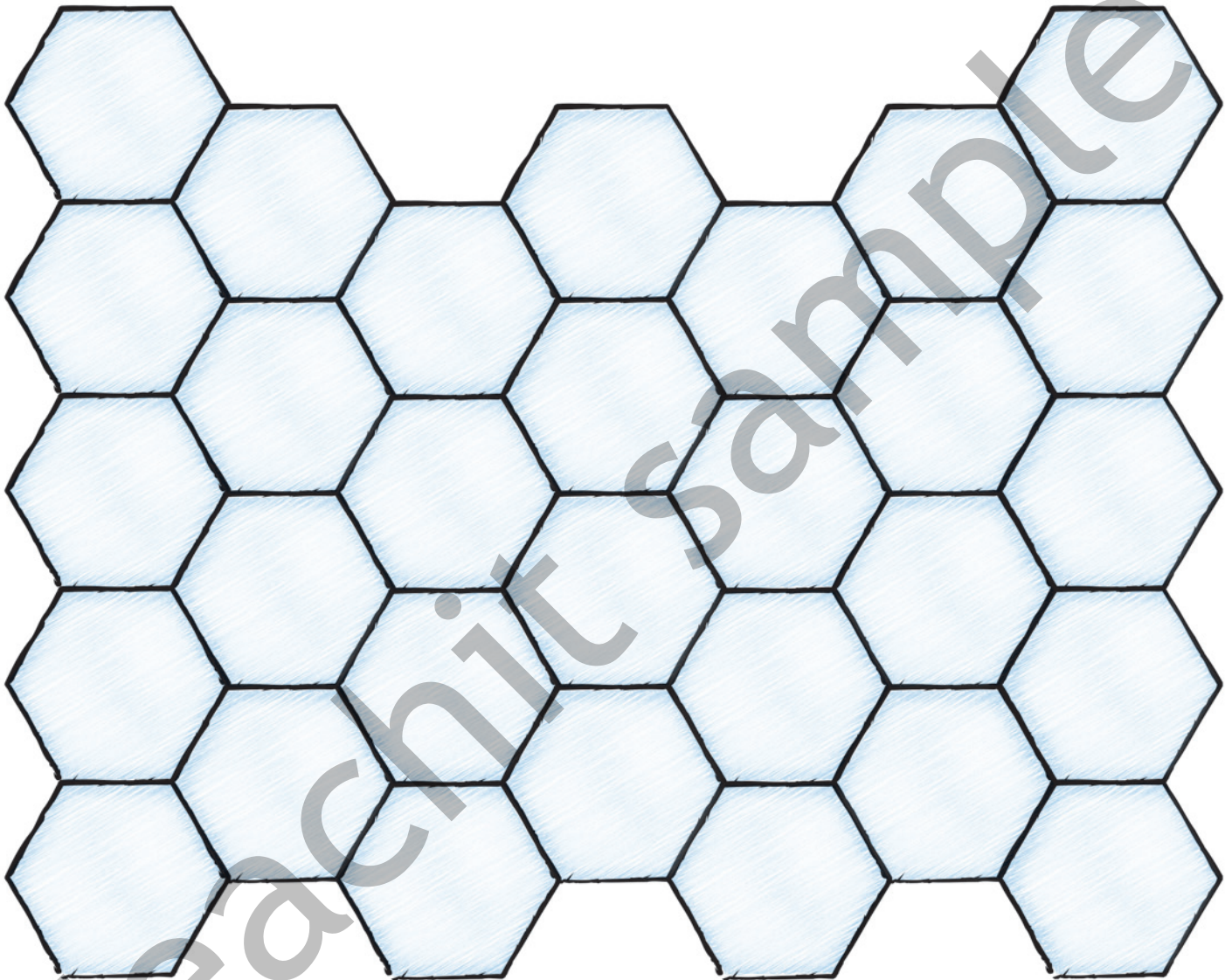
HUMANS
VERSUS NATURE

PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE

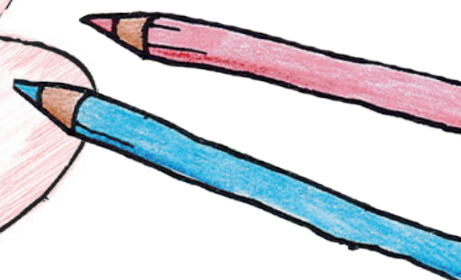
5

Think of 20 questions about the extract from 'The Prelude' for someone who is also revising these poems. Write the first letter of each answer in the hexagons, then play a 'Blockbusters' game.

Some could be quite easy ('What B did the narrator steal?' Boat), while others could be harder ('What N is personified in the phrase 'led by her'?' Nature).



You could use your questions as a prompt for more revision by expanding the questions further, e.g. 'How does the extract from 'The Prelude' tie in with themes often shown in Romantic poetry?' etc.



6

Find an example of each of the following techniques and then write a sentence explaining the effect. How does it reflect or enhance the poem's meaning?

TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE	EFFECT
repetition	'... a huge peak, black and huge'	The repetition of the word 'huge' suggests that the narrator's earlier evocative language has deserted him because he is suddenly in awe of nature.
personification		
enjambment		
simile		

TECHNIQUE	EXAMPLE	EFFECT
sibilance		
positive semantic field		
negative semantic field		
metaphor		

7 ZOOMING IN

- How does Wordsworth use structure to reflect a) his feelings whilst on the boat and b) nature's power?
- What does the quotation: 'that do not live / Like living men' tell us about the mountains and Wordsworth's attitude towards nature?
- How does Wordsworth use language and imagery to convey his initial sense of confidence and power while rowing the boat?
- How does Wordsworth use language and imagery to convey his later sense of confusion and powerlessness?
- Initially Wordsworth refers to the boat as 'a little boat'. It later becomes 'an elfin pinnacle' that moved 'like a swan'. When he returns to the mooring-place again, he refers to the boat as merely 'bark'. What does this change in description tell us about the way that Wordsworth feels at different stages and the way nature affects him?

> EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

Write a brief essay plan for each of these questions OR complete the essays in timed conditions.

- Compare the ways in which the extract from 'The Prelude' and 'Ozymandias' represent human conflict with nature.
- Discuss the ways in which fear is represented in the extract from 'The Prelude' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.
- Compare the ways in which power and vulnerability are represented in the extract from 'The Prelude' and one other poem from the 'Power and conflict' section.