

# Year 8 English



**Name:**

**Teacher:**

**Class:**

## How to use this booklet

In your exam, you will be asked to write an AMITY response to one of the poems we studied at the start of the term. It will be one of the following:

- Catrin, Gillian Clarke
- What Has Happened to Lulu, Charles Causley
- Still I Rise, Maya Angelou
- Human Interest, Carol Ann Duffy

To help prepare you for your exam, you should practise using AMITY to annotate these poems, plan AMITY responses, write introductions, and write paragraphs analysing how these poets use language and structure techniques to convey their ideas.

# AMITY

## How to annotate and then write about a poem

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** Read the title. This will give you important clues as to what the poem is about.

First, read it.

Second, start to ask questions: **ABOUT** who is speaking? Who to? Where are we? When? Why do you think the writer has written the poem? What 'snapshot' of human experience are they trying to capture?

Third - Reread slowly, line by line, stanza by stanza – each stanza offers a 'picture'. How does the poet 'unfold' his or her **IDEAS**?

Fourth – revisit second step, adding in more details as the poem starts to relinquish its secrets....

Fifth - **MOOD** – revisit the structure/stanzas in turn, and decide the speaker's thoughts and feelings, 'tarot cards'. Wistful/angry – how does the change in mood add to the message/theme of the poem?

Sixth – **TECHNIQUES** – which techniques does the writer use to paint their picture/create the mood/effect the reader / convey their important ideas?

Seventh – What is **YOUR RESPONSE** to the poem? How does it change your ideas about the subject/mood that is presented?

These moves can be condensed down to **AMITY: A = about M = mood, I = ideas T = techniques Y = your view.**

# AMITY Essay Format

## Introduction: About, Mood, Ideas

- What is the poem ABOUT (What is the moment of human experience being conveyed? Who is speaking? To whom?)
- What is the mood of the poem? Does it change?
- What ideas is the poet communicating through the poem?

## Analysis paragraph 1: Technique 1

- What idea does the poet express early in the poem? What **technique** do they use to express that idea?
- Explain the connotations of that word or method. Aim to explore layers of meaning.
- Effect on the reader?
- Why might the poet have wanted us to understand this at this moment?

## Analysis paragraph 2: Technique 2

- What idea does the poet express at a moment of change in the poem? What **technique** do they use to express that idea?
- Explain the connotations of that word or method. Aim to explore layers of meaning.
- Effect on the reader?
- Why might the poet have wanted us to understand this at this moment?

## Analysis paragraph 3: Technique 3

- What idea does the poet express at the end of the poem? What technique do they use to express that idea?
- Explain the connotations of that word or method. Aim to explore layers of meaning.
- Effect on the reader?
- Why might the poet have wanted us to understand this at this moment?

## Conclusion: Your Response

- What does the poem prompt you to understand individual experience?

## Catrin

I can remember you, child,  
As I stood in a hot, white  
Room at the window watching  
The people and cars taking  
Turn at the traffic lights.  
I can remember you, our first  
Fierce confrontation, the tight  
Red rope of love which we both  
Fought over. It was square  
Environmental blank, disinfected  
Of paintings or toys. I wrote  
All over the walls with my  
Words, coloured the clean squares  
With the wild, tender circles  
Of our struggle to become  
Separate. We want, we shouted,  
To be two, to be ourselves.

Neither won nor lost the struggle  
In the glass tank clouded with feelings  
Which changed us both. Still I am fighting  
You off, as you stand there  
With your straight, strong, long  
Brown hair and your rosy  
Defiant glare, bringing up  
From the heart's pool that old rope,  
Tightening about my life,  
Trailing love and conflict,  
As you ask may you skate  
In the dark, for one more hour.

Gillian Clarke



Task 1: Use AMITY (and your notes from earlier in the term) to annotate the poem.

## What Has Happened To Lulu?

What has happened to Lulu, mother?  
What has happened to Lu?  
There's nothing in her bed but an old rag-doll  
And by its side a shoe.

Why is her window wide, mother,  
The curtain flapping free,  
And only a circle on the dusty shelf  
Where her money-box used to be?

Why do you turn your head, mother,  
And why do tear drops fall?  
And why do you crumple that note on the fire  
And say it is nothing at all?

I woke to voices late last night,  
I heard an engine roar.  
Why do you tell me the things I heard  
Were a dream and nothing more?

I heard somebody cry, mother,  
In anger or in pain,  
But now I ask you why, mother,  
You say it was a gust of rain.

Why do you wander about as though  
You don't know what to do?  
What has happened to Lulu, mother?  
What has happened to Lu?

Charles Causley



Task 1: Use AMITY (and your notes from earlier in the term) to annotate the poem.

## Human Interest

Fifteen years minimum, banged up inside  
for what took thirty seconds to complete.  
She turned away. I stabbed. I felt this heat  
burn through my skull until reason had died.

I'd slogged my guts out for her, but she lied  
when I knew different. She used to meet  
some prick after work. She stank of deceit.

I loved her. When I accused her, she cried  
and denied it. Straight up, she tore me apart.  
On the Monday, I found the other bloke  
had bought her a chain with a silver heart.

When I think about her now, I near choke  
with grief. My baby. She wasn't a tart  
or nothing. I wouldn't harm a fly, no joke.

Carol Ann Duffy, 1985





Task 1: Use AMITY (and your notes from earlier in the term) to annotate the poem.

## Still I Rise

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

By Maya Angelou

