

NAME	INDEX NUMBER
SCHOOL	DATE

POETRY

1. 2006 P1

Read the poem below and answer the question that follows.

Isatou died
When she was only five
And full of pride
Just before she new

5 How small a loss
It brought to such a few
Her mother wept
Half grateful
To be so early bereft.

10 And did not see the smile
As tender as the root
Of the emerging plant
Which sealed her eyes
The neighbours wailed

15 As they were paid to do
And thought how big a spread
Might be her wedding too
The father looked at her
Through marble eyes and said;

20 “Who spilt the perfume
Mixed with morning dew?”

Lenrie Peters

(From: *The Earth Is Ours*. Edited by Ian Gordon)

i) Identify any two pairs of rhyming words in this poem. (2marks)

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ii) Which words would you stress in line 2 of this poem, and why? (2marks)

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iii) How would you say the last two lines of this poem? (2marks)

2. 2006 P2

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow:

Touch by Hugh Lewin
When I get out
I'm going to ask someone
To touch me
Very gently please
And slowly,
Touch me
I want
To learn again
How life feels

I've not been touched
For seven years
For seven years
I've been untouched
Out of touch
And I've learnt
To know now
The meaning of
Untouchable.
Untouchable-not quite
I can count the things
That have touched me

One: fists
At the beginning
Fierce mad fists
Beating beating
Till I remember
Screaming
Don't touch me

Please don't touch me

Two: paws
The first four years of paws
Every day
Patting paws, searching
Arms up, shoes off
Legs apart-
Probing paws, systematic
Heavy, indifferent
Probing away
All privacy.

I don't want fists and paws
I want
To want to be touched
Again
And to touch.
I want to feel alive
Again
I want to say
When I get out
Here I am
Please touch me.

(From poets to the people, edit by Barry Feinberg)

a) Where do you think the personal is? Briefly explain your answer. (3marks)

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b) What do you think the persona means by "touch"? (3marks)

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c) Using two illustrations, describe the persona's experience during the seven years

(4marks)

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d) What is the significance of the word "paws"? (2marks)

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e) Which device does the poet use to reinforce the theme? (2marks)

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f) Explain the meaning of the following words as they are used in the poem (2marks)
Prodding
Indifferent

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g) What does the poem reveal about human need? (4marks)

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3. 2007 P2

Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow

"Sympathy"

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;

When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass
And the river flows like a stream of glass
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes
And the faint perfume from its petals steals
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he rather would be on the branch a swing
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting
I know why he beats his wings
I know why the caged bird sings, ah me
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore
When he beats his bars and would be free
It is not a song of joy or glee
But a prayer that he sends from his hearts deep core
But a plea, that upward to heaven he flings
I know why the caged bird sings!

(Adapted from the poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar in America Negro Poetry,
edited by Arna Bontemps. New York: Hill and Waug, 1974

(a) Explain briefly what the poem is about (3 marks)

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(b) What does the poet focus on in each of the three stanzas? Give your answer in one form (6 marks)

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(c) How would you describe the persona's feelings towards the caged bird? (4 marks)

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(d) What can we infer about the persona's own experiences? (3 marks)

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(e) Identify a simile in the first stanza and explain why it is used (2 marks)

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(f) Explain the meaning of the following lines
(i) And the faint perfume from its petals steals (1 mark)

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(ii) And they pulse again with a keener sting (1 mark)

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4. 2008

Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow.

“The Debt” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

This is the debt I play
Just for one riotous day,
Years of regret and grief,
Sorrow without relief.

Put it I will to the end-
Until the grave, my friend,
Gives me a true release-
Gives me the clasp of peace.
Slight was the thing I bought,
Small was the debt I though,
Poor was the loan at best
God! But the interest!

(From American Negro Poetry, Edited by arna Bontemps)

- (i) List at the pairs of rhyming words
(3marks)

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- (ii) Describe the tone of voice that would be appropriate in the reading of this poem.
(3marks)

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- (iii) How does the punctuation in the second stanza influence your reading of the poem?
(3marks)

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(iv) How would you say the last are of the poem?
(2marks)

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5. 2008 P2

Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow.

The splash

Under warm sunshine,
A pond of water rests, calm and serene.
The blue sky inhabits the middle of the pond,
And its sides reflect the greenery,
Spotted with the yellow and the red,
The red and the violet
The water, the sky, the vegetation,
Hand in hand convey harmony and peace.
Then comes the splash!
And a tremendous stirring surges:
Reflections distort,
Giving way to a rushing flow of triples
Ripples innumerable,
All fleeing from the wound.
Time elapses,
Ripples innumerable
All fleeing from the wound
Time elapses,
Ripples fade,
Reflections regain their shape,
And once again emerges the pond
Smooth and tranquil.
But the stone!
The stone will always cling to the bottom

Yusuf O. Kassem

a) What do you think this poem is about?
(3marks)

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b) What is implied by the use of color imagery (lines 4, 5, 6)?
(4marks)

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c) Identify and explain two stylistic devices used in this poem other than color imagery.
(4marks)

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d) Describe the tone of this poem
(3marks)

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e) Explain the meaning of the last two lines.
(3marks)

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f) Explain the message of the following words as they are used in the poem:
(3marks)
Surges
Fade
Tranquil

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6. 2010 P2

Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow.

"Song of the wagondriver". B.S. Johson

My first love was a ten-ton truck
They gave me when I started, And
though she played the bitch with
me I grieved when we were
parted.

Since then I've had a dozen more,

The wound was quick to heal,

And now it's easier to say

I'm married to my wheel.

I've trunked it north, I've trunked
it south, On wagons good and
bad, But none was ever really like
The first I ever had.

The life is hard, the hours are long,

Sometimes I cease to feel,

But I go on, for it seems to me

I'm married to my wheel.

Often I think of my home and
kids, Out on the road at night,
And think of taking a local
job Provided the money's
right.

Two nights a week I see my
wife And eat a decent meal,
But otherwise, for all my life,
•5. I'm married to my
wheel.

(From *The Earth is Ours: Poems for Secondary Schools.*

Selected by Ian Gordon)

(a) Briefly explain what the poem is about. (2 marks)

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(b) What is contradictory about the persona's relationship with his first truck? (2 marks)

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(c) The persona is facing a real dilemma. Which is it? (2 marks)

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(d) Identify and illustrate any two literary devices that the poet uses. (4 marks)

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(e) What makes the persona's job demanding? Give your answer in **note form**. (4 marks)

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(f) Explain the meaning of the following lines: (i) Sometimes I cease to feel
(i) Sometime I cease to feel (2 marks)

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(ii) Provided the money's right (2 marks)

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(g) Explain the meaning of the words below as used in the poem.

(i) grieved (1 mark)

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(ii) trunked (1 mark)

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7. 2012 Q3a P2

(a) Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow:

If We Must Die – Claude McKay

If we must die – let it not be like dogs
Haunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot,
If we must die – oh let us nobly die
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
Oh kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow
What thought before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

(i) Describe the rhyme scheme of this poem, (2 marks)

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(ii) Which words would you stress in the last line of this poem and why?(3 marks)

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(iii) Apart from rhyme, how else has the poet achieved rhythm?

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8. 2012 Q3 P1

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.

He is a jolly good boss
Sits behind a shiny mahogany desk,
Dreamy and contented like an over-fed python
That has just swallowed a bearded goat.

He is a good-natured fellow
Always patting the rumps of secretaries in tight skirts
Which say: marry me if you dare
Laughs absent-mindedly and sinks back into dear oblivion
He is an industrious head
Gets dog-tired early in the morning from signing a few papers
Whose contents he is mildly aware of
And leaves for lunch and for the day at 11.30 a.m.

He is a humorous chap
Jokes about how he is underpaid and over-worked to his juniors.
Who laugh subserviently to conceal their indignation
And grudging envy.

He is a mighty generous comrade
Braggs about his christ-heart.
Being a proud donor of a few bastards
To guileless girls under him,
And believes his is a God-sanctioned mission
That dates back to Abraham.

He is a jolly good boss,
A perfect paragon of leadership.
Kitche O. Magak.

(a) What is the message of this poem?

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(b) Give evidence from the poem which indicates that the juniors are suffering quietly (2marks)

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(c) Explain the image in the line "Dreamy and contented like an overfed python" (3marks)

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(d) Identify and comment on two aspects of irony in the poem (4marks)

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(e) Explain the meaning of the following as used in the poem :
(I) Oblivion.....

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(II) Guiless.....

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(III) God sanctioned mission.....

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(f) Identify two instances of alliteration in the poem (2marks)

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(g) Why are the last two lines in the poem significant (2marks)

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