

Take the Plunge!



LIFE PATHS: POETRY UNIT WITH ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

A three-poem module with options for CBA1, CBA2 or Final Assessment exam-style questions.

Each poem can take from 1-4 classes depending on the time spent on activities. You can select whichever assessment tasks are most appropriate.

TOPIC: Poetry
SUBJECT: Junior Cycle English
YEAR: Second/Third Year

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES	TAKE THE PLUNGE! MATERIALS	RESOURCES NEEDED
R2, 3,4, 7, 9, 10 W3, 4 OL 5, 10, 11	Textbook pp. 200-206, 210, 220 Chart Your Progress Journal (CYP) pp. 59-61, 67-69	1. tinyurl.com/Icarus-painting 2. Everybody Hurts video by REM 3. CYP Success Criteria Poetry Performance p.60 4. CYP Poetry Revision p. 57 5. Sample Answer (Practice for Final Assessment Question 2 PDF of p. 67 from page 220 in textbook)

1. INTRODUCTION: POEM 1	2. CLASS DISCUSSION	3. INTRODUCTION: POEM 2	4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Direct the class to <i>Take the Plunge</i> p. 200. Divide the class into groups. Ask them to prepare a choral reading of <i>The Door</i> by Miroslav Holub. (20 mins)	Class discussion/reaction to the poem and the different interpretations. (10 mins). Leading to homework – one of the ‘Why Don’t You’ writing tasks p201.	Display the Brueghel’s painting ‘ <i>The Fall of Icarus</i> ’ to the class. Using the prompts on p. 202 discuss the painting (5-10 mins). Read <i>Musée des Beaux Arts</i> by W.H. Auden.	Tease out the connection between the painting and the poem using the ‘Take the Plunge’ questions on page 204. Leading to homework – one of the ‘Why Don’t You’ writing tasks.

OPTIONAL ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITY	5. INTRODUCTION: POEM 3	6. CLASS DISCUSSION	OPTIONAL FURTHER ANALYSIS
Ask the students to prepare an interview with the poet based on the activity in 'Thrash it Out' on p. 204	Direct students to silently read the poem <i>All of Us</i> by Kit Wright and jot down its main message. Play the video <i>Everybody Hurts</i> . (10 mins)	Compare the poem and the song teasing out the similarities and differences, leading to writing a short paragraph outlining student's preference. (20 mins)	Use the analytical questions from 'Take the Plunge' on p. 206 to explore the poetic techniques used in the poem (20 – 30mins). Option to reward hard work with 'phobia' game p. 206
CBA1: ORAL LANGUAGE ACTIVITY	CBA2: COLLECTION OF TEXTS	REVISION	FINAL ASSESSMENT- EXAM STYLE Q.
Share Success criteria handout for poetry performance with the class (CYP, p. 60). Discuss expectations with class. Direct practice for performance using the success criteria. Students perform their chosen poem from the selection.	Using the poem <i>Ecstasis</i> , ask students to write a poem using the prompts suggested. Provide them with the success criteria and allow them to redraft poem for possible inclusion in their Collection of Texts.	Share the poetry revision page with the students (CYP, p. 57). Ask them to prepare revision notes on one of the poems using the prompts in the handout.	The students can use their revision notes to answer one of the exam-style questions from p. 210 and 220 in the textbook. Option to demonstrate sample answer (handout below).

Life Paths

The Door

Miroslav Holub

(translated from the Czech by Ian Milner)

Go and open the door.
Maybe outside there's
a tree, or a wood,
a garden,
or a magic city.

Go and open the door.
Maybe a dog's rummaging.
Maybe you'll see a face,
or an eye,
or the picture
of a picture.

Go and open the door.
If there's a fog
it will clear.

Go and open the door.
Even if there's only
the darkness ticking,
even if there's only
the hollow wind,
even if
nothing
is there,
go and open the door.

At least
there'll be
a draught.

DIVE IN!

1. Who is the poet speaking to?
2. What might you see if you open the door?
3. What is the smallest consequence of opening the door that the poet suggests in order to encourage you to open it?

Poets often use *symbols* to represent an idea or a concept, for example, a sunrise might represent 'new beginnings'.

TAKE THE PLUNGE!

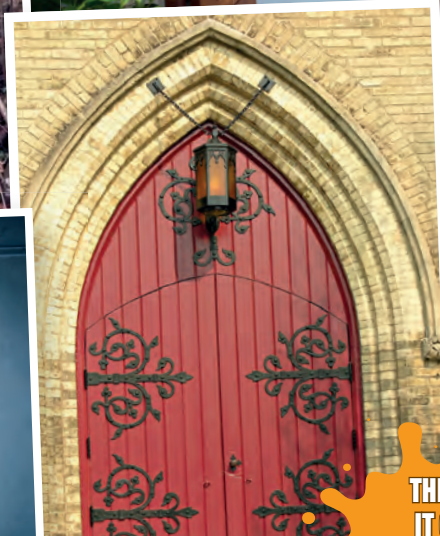
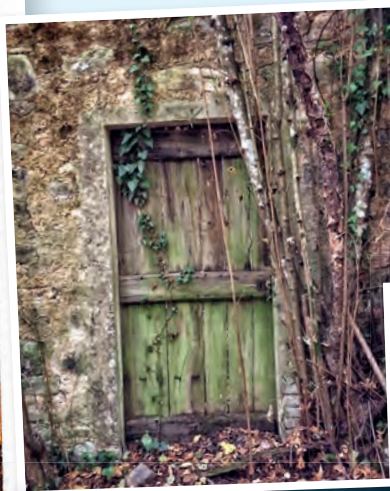
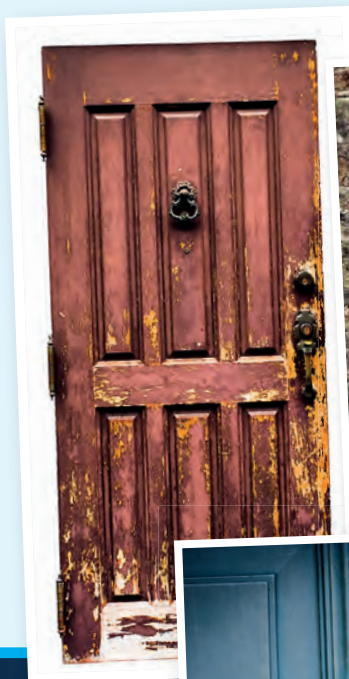
1. Even though it seems to be about opening a door, this poem has a deeper message. What do you think it is?
P Q E
2. There is a moment of humour in the poem. Where is it?
3. Which of the images struck you most? Explain why.

WHY DON'T YOU...

Describe in detail the scene you would like to find on the other side of your 'door'.

OR

Choose one of the doors shown here and write the first paragraph of a story creating the setting that appears beyond it.



THRASH IT OUT!

In small groups, practise reading a verse of this poem each. Have a competition to see which group can read the poem in the most inspiring or motivational tone.

Painting

Look carefully at the painting below. Then answer the questions that follow.



DIVE IN!

1. When do you think this painting is set?
2. What is the man in the foreground doing?
3. What do you see in the bay?
4. Look very carefully in the bottom right-hand corner underneath the ship. What can you see in the water?
5. This painting is called *The Fall of Icarus*. Is this the title you would expect?
6. Why do you think Brueghel, the painter, made Icarus such an insignificant part of the painting?

Icarus was the son of an Ancient Greek called Daedalus. Father and son were imprisoned and, in order to escape, Dedalus made two sets of wings. Icarus did not listen to his father's warnings and flew too close to the sun. The wax on his wings melted, and he fell into the sea and drowned. This was seen as punishment from the gods because Icarus had become too proud.

This poem was written by W. H. Auden
after seeing the painting *The Fall of Icarus*.

Musée des Beaux Arts

W. H. Auden

Musée des Beaux Arts – a famous art gallery in Belgium

About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow. In a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
In Breughel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

The Old Masters – famous, respected artists from the past

TAKE
THE PLUNGE!

1. The poet says that the 'old Masters' understood that human suffering 'takes place / While someone else is eating ... or just walking dully along'. How is the same point made in Brueghel's painting? **P Q E**
2. Many paintings focus on religious themes. In light of this, what might the 'miraculous birth' and 'the dreadful martyrdom' be referring to?
3. a) According to the poet, what was happening while the 'miraculous birth' and 'dreadful martyrdom' were taking place?
b) Was everyone taking notice of these special events?
4. Look at the poet's description of the painting in the last eight lines.
a) What does he imagine the ploughman's attitude was?
b) What effect does his description of Icarus have?
c) Why does the ship sail 'calmly on'?
5. What do both Brueghel's painting and Auden's poem say about life and suffering?

WHY
DON'T YOU...

Pretend that you are a sailor on the ship in the painting. Try to tell the captain of the ship that you saw a boy with wings fall out of the sky. Write out the conversation that you have.

OR

Search online using the term 'famous paintings'. Choose one that catches your attention. Note the name of the artist and the work. Write a short paragraph explaining why this painting caught your attention and why you liked or disliked it.

THRASH
IT OUT!

In pairs, imagine that you are going to interview W. H. Auden about this poem. Write out five questions that you would like to ask him, and the answers you think he might give. You might want to focus on some of the following:

- * Where the inspiration for the poem came from
- * Why he likes art
- * Specific lines or images from the poem that you found interesting
- * What he feels is the main message in the poem.

(Go to page 121 in Chapter 3 **Media Studies** for help with interviewing techniques.)

Take turns being the interviewer and the interviewee (Auden). You could record your interview.

Write an article to be published in the school newsletter or website based on your interview.

All of Us

Kit Wright

All of us are afraid
More often than we tell.

There are times we cling like mussels to the sea wall,
And pray that the pounding waves
Won't smash our shell.

Times we hear nothing but the sound
Of our loneliness, like a cracked bell
From fields far away where the trees are in icy shade.

O many a time in the night-time and in the day,
More often than we say,
We are afraid.

If people say they are never frightened,
I don't believe them.
If people say they are frightened,
I want to retrieve them.

From that dark shivering haunt
Where they don't want to be,
Nor I.

Let's make of ourselves, therefore, an enormous sky
Over whatever
We hold most dear.

And we'll comfort each other,
Comfort each other's
Fear.

DIVE IN!

1. In the opening line of the poem, what does the poet say we all have in common?
2. What does the poet compare us to in the second verse?
3. What reaction does the poet have to people who say they are never frightened?
4. What does the poet suggest we do to help each other?

A simile is a comparison between two things of different natures using the words 'like', 'as' or 'than'.

1. The poet compares us to 'mussels' clinging to the sea wall. What does this simile suggest about how people cope with being afraid? **P Q E**
2. The poet uses a simile to compare loneliness to a sound.
 - a) What sound does the poet compare it to?
 - b) Why do you think he chose this sound?
 - c) Where is this sound coming from?
 - d) What atmosphere does the description create?
3. What do you think the poet means when he says he would like to 'retrieve' people who say they are frightened? **P Q E**
4. The images of fear created in this poem are very claustrophobic or dark. Find examples of these.
5. The final image of being beneath an 'enormous sky' contrasts with the images of fear. Why do you think the poet finds this comforting? **P Q E**

WHY DON'T YOU...

Imagine that you are giving advice to a sixth-class student who is anxious about starting secondary school. Write down five things you would suggest to make the transition easier.

OR

Watch the video for 'Everybody Hurts' by the band REM on **YouTube**. Jot down three similarities that you notice between the theme of the song/video and the poem 'All of Us'. Write a short paragraph explaining which one you prefer and why.



THRASH IT OUT!

Have a look at this list of things that people are afraid of. In pairs, see if you can match the official term with the fear that it describes. See which of you gets the most correct!

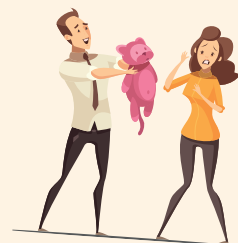


Fear of...

1. Halloween
2. Books
3. Feet
4. Amphibians
5. Dentists
6. Teenagers
7. Dogs
8. Clowns
9. Ugliness
10. Animals
11. Knees
12. Chickens
13. Heights
14. Blood
15. Rooms
16. Cooking
17. Rain
18. The colour white
19. Needles or injections
20. Strangers or foreigners



- a) Acrophobia
- b) Alektorophobia
- c) Bibliophobia
- d) Batrachophobia
- e) Cacophobia
- f) Cynophobia
- g) Coulrophobia
- h) Dentophobia
- i) Ephebiphobia
- j) Genophobia
- k) Haemophobia
- l) Koinoniphobia
- m) Leukophobia
- n) Mageirocophobia
- o) Ombrophobia
- p) Podophobia
- q) Samhainophobia
- r) Trypanophobia
- s) Xenophobia
- t) Zoophobia



The teacher will give you the correct answers, or you can look them up online!

Testing the waters



Prepare for Oral Communication Classroom-Based Assessment **p.216**

Reciting a poem

Choosing my poem

Poem A: _____

Why I like this poem:

Ideas I have for performing this poem:

Voice/Emotions I want to convey _____

Speed of delivery/Changes of pace _____

Something I want to emphasise _____

Gestures or facial expressions I might use _____

Other ideas: _____

Poem B: _____

Why I like this poem:

Ideas I have for performing this poem:

Voice/Emotions I want to convey _____

Speed of delivery/Changes of pace _____

Something I want to emphasise _____

Gestures or facial expressions I might use _____

Other ideas: _____

Teacher feedback: Reciting a poem

— / — / —

Features of quality of communication through recitation	Y. to M.	I. L.	A. Exp.	Exc.
Fluency <i>(speaking naturally, language flows appropriately to the text, clear delivery of lines, use of pause and varied pace)</i>				
Control of material <i>(confident delivery, e.g. committed to performance, clear understanding of the poem demonstrated by interpretation)</i>				
Imaginatively shaped <i>(interpretation of poem through clear tone, emphasis and carefully considered dramatic choices)</i>				
Clear purpose <i>(clear understanding of the poem demonstrated through the performance)</i>				
Engagement with audience <i>(voice projection, eye contact where appropriate, performance sustained)</i>				
Other comments				

Reflecting on reciting a poem

Title of poem recited: _____

My choice of poem worked well/did not work well because

I feel I did/did not communicate the poem's meaning because

Ecstasis

John FitzGerald

If there is
to have been one
moment, it could be this:
body sprung from turf, suspended,
ash-stick hoisted, level and at bay,
arm aloft to pluck a rough-seamed purse
of rag and yarn and glory from the sky;
that instant, every inch of body
and mind outstrained to reach for
the impossible, when, into my
hand like a bird
it came.

WHY DON'T YOU...

Look at how this poet has captured the joy and exhilaration of the moment when everything comes together in a small but special instant. For John FitzGerald, it is the instant when he catches the sliotar in his hand. He captures this moment both through his word choices, and the way he shaped those words on the page to look like an actual sliotar.

- * Choose a moment when hours of practice have resulted in a split second of achievement.
- * **Brainstorm** words, phrases and emotions that you associate with that moment.
- * Think of how you might shape those words on the page to help represent the feeling.
- * Try writing a poem like 'Ecstasis'.

Teacher feedback: Writing a poem

___/___/___

Features of quality of Collection of Student's Texts: Poem	Y. to M.	I. L.	A. Exp.	Exc.
Command of genre: Poetry <i>(awareness of word choice, language patterns, tone, imagery)</i>				
Competent writing <i>(use of simple, figurative language, appropriate vocabulary, poetic techniques)</i>				
Evidence of originality and creativity <i>(interesting theme, creation of mood and atmosphere, shaping of material)</i>				
Quality and accuracy of word choice <i>(varied vocabulary, accuracy of mechanics, awareness of effective language patterns)</i>				
Awareness of audience <i>(varied vocabulary, accuracy of mechanics, awareness of effective language patterns)</i>				
Other comments				

Reflecting on writing a poem

Title of poem: _____

Identify two features of your poem and explain how they demonstrate poetic techniques.

A change I made after peer feedback was _____

This improved my poem because _____

Focus on Final Assessment

Revision notes: My studied poetry

Revise your studied poetry using your Textbook, questions you answered in your copy and other notes you may have.

The following prompts will help you to prepare your own revision notes on each poem.

TITLE AND POET:

THEME

The main **theme** in this poem is _____

This was evident _____

It was also clear from _____

Therefore, the main message was _____

I did/did not like how this poem dealt with the theme of _____

because _____

TONE

The **tone** the poet uses is _____

I saw this when _____

It was also evident _____

I found this tone added to the **mood** of _____

because _____

There was an overall **atmosphere** of _____

This made me feel _____
because _____

TECHNIQUE

A **poetic technique** I noticed was _____

This can be seen in the line _____

The effect of this was _____

Another poetic technique I noticed was _____

This can be seen in the line _____

The effect of this was _____

Another poetic technique I noticed was _____

This can be seen in the line _____

The effect of this was _____

Remember: You can use the prompts on these pages to prepare revision notes on any poem you wish to study for your Final Assessment.



Practise for the Final Assessment

In the Final Assessment – the two-hour exam you will sit in June of Third Year – you may be asked to demonstrate a critical appreciation of a poem you have studied, give thoughtful value judgements and respond imaginatively to it.

Regardless of which question you choose to answer below, ensure that you **brainstorm** in the Rough Work box provided, using **PALS** where appropriate.

It is also important to remember that you will have a limited time to write in the exam. Therefore, you must begin practising your answers using the following guidelines:

- For an answer worth 5 marks, you should write for 3 minutes only.
- To calculate how much time you should spend on each answer, divide the number of marks by 5 and multiply the result by 3. For example, a 30-mark question should take roughly 18 minutes to answer. ($30 \div 5 = 6$; $6 \times 3 = 18$)



Answer one of the questions below. Note that it is important to read the full question before you begin.

Question 1: Showing Critical Appreciation

Read parts (a) and (b) carefully before beginning your answer.

- (a) *Poems often explore themes that challenge us to stop and think.*

Select a poem you have studied and explain why a theme in this poem challenged you to stop and think. Use the poem to support your response.

(15 marks)

- (b) Do you think the poet uses language effectively in your chosen poem? Explain your answer, supporting your response with suitable quotation from the poem.

(15 marks)

Question 2: Giving Thoughtful Value Judgements

Parts (a) and (b) of this question are linked. Read both parts carefully before beginning your answer.

- (a) Imagine that you are nominating one of the poems you have studied for inclusion in an anthology of *Best Junior Cycle Poems*.

Write your nomination email, briefly outlining two key reasons that you believe make the poem a worthy inclusion.

(5 marks)

- (b) Referring to the two key reasons you mentioned in part (a), explain using detailed references to the poem why your nomination is justified.

(25 marks)

Question 3: Responding Imaginatively

Choose one of your studied poems and explain, with detailed reference to the poem, why you believe it would be suitable for a dramatisation.

You might like to take the following into account:

- Is there a strong sense of setting which could be recreated on a stage?
- Was there use of dialogue?
- Did the poem contain characters?
- Can you find conflict that would create dramatic tension?
- What theme is the poem exploring?
- How would the visual or emotional elements of the poem translate to the stage?

(30 marks)

Before answering this question, look again at revision pages 57 and 58 of the **Chart Your Progress Student Journal**. They may help you to plan your answer.

For help with timing and other exam techniques, go to Chapter 8 Focus on Final Assessment.

Practise for the Final Assessment: Question 2

Optional rough work

Best JC Poem??? → Musée des Beaux Arts
(a) WHY? (b) EXPLAIN
1. good message → life goes on
2. makes you think life / art → big concepts, paintings poems say things about life

(a) Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this email to nominate 'Musée des Beaux Arts' by W.H. Auden for the anthology of Best Junior Cycle Poems. My two reasons for this are firstly that it contains an excellent and relevant message for the world today and secondly that it makes you think deeply about life and art.

(b) Firstly I believe my nomination is justified because the poem has a very strong message about life and suffering. I think the poem is saying that **suffering happens but life goes on**. The poem made clear how suffering takes place but meanwhile others are just living their lives away as normal, how it takes place / While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along. Most of the time we are just getting on with our own lives - eating, breathing, walking. We are like the dog innocently living away in our 'dodgy life' oblivious to what is going on around us. We are in living in 'some untidy spot / Where - the torturer's horse / Scratches its innocent behind on a tree'. The horse has no idea that its owner is a 'torturer' - this represents how we, like the horse, don't always know what is happening. But the poem moves on to make us question if this obliviousness is acceptable. Secondly this poem makes us think more deeply about the relationship between life and art. Auden began this poem by referring to the 'old Masters' who painted famous paintings and how they understood that **suffering** was basically a **part of being human and living life** 'how well, they understood / Its human position'. In his poem, Auden is making the same point as Brueghel was in his painting about life and suffering but Auden is also making us question how we often ignore things that are right in front of our eyes - beautiful things, 'amazing' events - because we have 'somewhere to get to'. Auden's poem, like Brueghel's painting is reminding us to lift up our heads, look around us and think more about our existence.

67

Practise for the Final Assessment: Question 3

Optional rough work

Dulce et Decorum Est → suitable for drama ...
→ setting → War ZONE = empty STAGE
→ SOUND effects - bombs 'hoots'
→ dialogue - 'Gas, Gas'
→ soldiers → one dies - focus on him
→ poet speaks out at audience

A poem I have studied which I believe would be suitable for dramatisation is 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen. I believe it could be put on stage because there is a very strong sense of setting in the opening lines, 'we cursed through sludge / till on the haunting flares we turned our backs'. A group of soldiers are leaving the front line trenches during the First World War. The empty stage could represent the mud and barrenness around them. Lighting effects could be used for the 'haunting flares' and sound effects for the 'hoots / of tired outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind them'.

I believe it is also very suitable for dramatisation because there is a dramatic moment captured in the dialogue at the beginning of the second verse, 'Gas! Gas! Quick boys!' As the gas attack happens, there is shouting and confusion. This could be easily and effectively conveyed on stage with gestures and body language. The group of soldiers could be spread out on stage in such a way to emphasise the isolation of the one soldier who is left, 'yelling out and stumbling / And floundring like a man in fire or lime ...'.

I believe it is very suitable for staging because the poet, one of the soldiers, could step out of the scene for the third verse and address the audience watching directly, 'if in some smothering dreams, you too could pace / behind the wagon that we flung him in'. The actor could point out at us to emphasise that we are part of the poem. The poem was written to provoke guilt in the reader about being complacent about the horrors of war. This would be a very striking and effective way of forcing us to acknowledge the theme of the poem.

67