

## London by William Blake



Blake's illustrated version of *London* in the *Songs of Experience*, 1794.

### Background and Context

- William Blake lived 1757 – 1827. He was very unconventional and worked as an engraver and illustrator.
- His work is from the early Romantic period. Common ideas of Romanticism include freedom, the importance of emotion over reason and the beauty of nature.
- Blake had visions from an early age and talked to angels.
- Blake was against organised religion and saw it as a form of social control
- Blake believed in the abolition of the monarchy and he supported the French and American Revolutions (1789 and 1776)
- London was a city of great poverty at the time

### Synopsis of the poem

- The speaker walks around the city of London and comments on the people and institutions he observes.

### Form and Structure

- Dramatic monologue
- Regular line length, stanzas and rhyme scheme. This matches the theme of control.
- ABAB rhyme scheme could echo the steps of the narrator or perhaps the monotonous routine of life for most citizens.
- Repetition is used – ‘mark’ and ‘in every’. The structure supports the rhetoric of the language.
- Focus of the poem is mainly people in poverty – some criticism of institutions in stanza 3

### Vocabulary

- Chartered – mapped. This could be literal but also suggests control. In Blake's time, landowners could ‘charter’ streets and control who was, and was not, allowed in.
- Woe – extreme sadness
- Ban – a public announcement, often to forbid something
- Manacles – handcuffs
- Appalls – shocks, literally makes black
- Hapless – unlucky
- Harlot – prostitute
- Blight – damages, spoils
- Hearse – vehicle that transports a coffin

### Quotations

- ‘mind forg’d manacles’**: People are not free to think, their minds are restricted and confined (much like the streets and The Thames have been controlled by the Charter). The city and, in particular, the Church and the Palace are responsible for the way in which people have been robbed of their ability to think.
- ‘charter’d’**: Repeated adjective, shows streets, rivers and society are regulated and controlled. (Link with ‘manacles’)
- ‘Blights with plagues the marriage hearse’**: Links image of love with death and decay, pessimistic view of future. Image of disease (given by the ‘harlot’). Marriage is a church controlled form of love so is seen negatively by Blake.
- ‘runs in blood down palace walls’**: Hyperbole/metaphor shows Blake's condemnation of monarchy. The hereditary nobility is responsible for the death and injury of soldiers who pay for their privileges with their lives.

### Poetic Techniques

Oxymoron – apparent contradiction in ‘marriage hearse’.  
 Repetition – used for emphasis (charter’d, mark(s), in every) and rhetoric  
 Semantic field of unhappiness – woe, fear, cry, tear, hapless, plague, blight  
 Rhetorical devices to persuade – emotive language (‘infant’s cry of fear’), repetition  
 Sensory language (visual and auditory) makes you feel you are there, immerses you in the atmosphere of the city  
 Four quatrains – regular rhyme scheme and rhythm  
 Anaphora – repetition of ‘in every’ at the start of lines 5-7

### Links

The Prelude  
 The Emigree  
 Storm on the Island

### Tone

angry, pessimistic, dark, rebellious

## Poetry

### INTRODUCTION – explain most important similarity & two differences with a connection to question

Both 'POEM A' and 'POEM B' present	<i>the theme of memories</i>	as	in order to	show convey evoke suggest imply conjure	<i>having traumatic effects</i>	<i>that the consequences of war last far longer than the battlefield.</i>
	<i>individual experiences</i>				<i>full of loss</i>	<i>how people desperately hold onto memories.</i>
	<i>the reality of battle</i>				<i>violent</i>	<i>that a glorified view of war is mistaken.</i>
	<i>the power of nature</i>				<i>a hostile force</i>	<i>that nature is more powerful than humans.</i>

However, whilst 'POEM A'	<i>the soldiers are open to nature and are quietly and slowly killed,</i>	in 'POEM B'	<i>the people dig in to stand against the forces of nature.</i>
	<i>absolute political power is presented as transitory</i>		<i>powerful people are presented as being completely ruthless.</i>
	<i>the poet protests against the social injustice he sees in London</i>		<i>the poet writes about the political oppression a refugee faces in a new country.</i>
	<i>the narrator grieves for the loss of her son</i>		<i>the narrator is haunted by memories he can't shake.</i>

### WHAT – introduce the idea in your paragraph with a connection to the question

#### 1. WHAT (topic sentence) that links both poems together.

In both poems _____ and _____	the poets show	<i>the theme of memories</i>	by	<i>showing positive memories of childhood</i>
	the poets present	<i>individual experiences</i>		<i>showing how violent war is</i>
	the poets explore	<i>the reality of battle</i>	through	<i>the speaker's tyrannical leadership</i>
		<i>the power of humans</i>		<i>showing nature as intimidating</i>
<i>the power of nature</i>				

#### Name one of your poems to analyse in this paragraph:

#### 2: Introduce your poem to analyse

In	Name the Poem	the poet shows the poet presents the poet explores	memories the violence of war nature as intimidating	by through	showing the speaker's positive experiences of childhood.
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### HOW – introduce your quotation (where you put your quote into your paragraph)

#### 3: Introducing quotations

For instance, For example, This is clear This can be seen This is shown This is evidenced	when	the poet  the speaker	states says refers to comments uses	'.....'
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### HOW – explain how your quote proves your WHAT idea

#### 4. Explain your quote

This	shows conveys evokes suggests implies conjures	<i>the power of nature can be frightening and make humans feel insignificant.</i>  <i>the persona is traumatised by their experience of battle.</i>  <i>that striving for power is ultimately pointless.</i>
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### Zoom-in – specific words or phrases using subject terminology (language analysis)

#### 5a. Commenting on a whole phrase or quotation

The use of this...	metaphor simile personification imagery Caesura Enjambment	reinforces highlights conveys suggests implies demonstrates	<i>the Duke's abuse of power</i>  <i>the power of the natural world</i>  <i>the fear the speaker feels</i>
The poet's use of this			

#### 5b. Commenting on a specific word choice

The verb '.....'	shows	<i>the aggression and violence of war</i>	highlighting demonstrating emphasising	<i>how soldiers are emotionally affected by war.</i>
The adjective '.....'	conveys	<i>the emotional turmoil the speaker feels</i>		<i>how the government do not do enough to support ex-soldiers.</i>
The adverb '.....'	evokes	<i>the negative consequences of war</i>		<i>how the consequences of war can be long-lasting.</i>
The noun '.....'	suggests implies conjures			

### WHY – comment on the poets' purpose and wider messages

#### 6a: Showing what the poet was trying to achieve

Perhaps, Possibly, Potentially,	the poet was suggesting the poet was promoting to the idea the poet was criticizing the poet was emphasising	<i>his/her disgust at the way society and the government treat those who have fought.</i> <i>anti-war ideas and beliefs.</i> <i>the horrors that those involved in conflict have to suffer/witness.</i> <i>the way those in power exploit others.</i>
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#### 6b. Suggesting the impact on the reader/ how the poet wanted the readers to react

The poet wanted the readers to	feel realise be aware of change understand	<i>sympathy for those in conflict who are forced to leave their homes.</i> <i>how those in power abuse their status.</i> <i>the treatment of soldiers when they return from duty.</i>
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#### 6c: Identifying shared ideas across two poems

In both poems, the poets	examine explore	<i>the impact of war and the wider consequences of conflict.</i> <i>the brutality and senselessness of the suffering of soldiers.</i>
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### Making a comparative link – use a comparative word

#### 7a: Comparing similarities or differences in ideas between poems

In the same way, Similarly, On the other hand, Conversely,	(name of poet)	uses shows suggests	<i>that nature is intimidating.</i>  <i>feelings of anger.</i>
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### Then repeat steps 3-6 for your second poem.