

# AS and A LEVEL

*Delivery Guide*

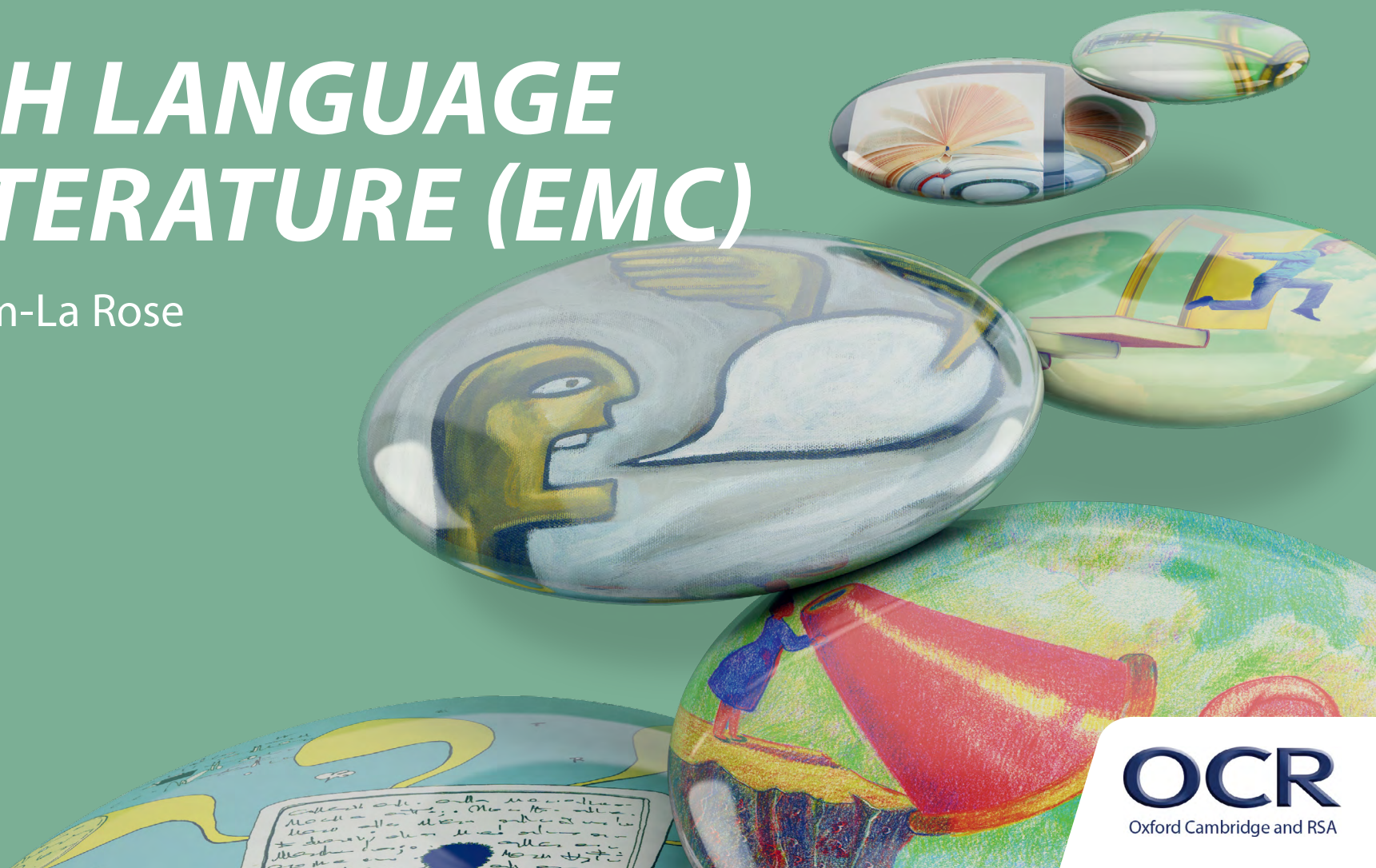
H074/H474

Accredited

## ***ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC)***

Theme: Jacob Sam-La Rose

March 2016



We will inform centres about any changes to the specification. We will also publish changes on our website. The latest version of our specification will always be the one on our website ([www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)) and this may differ from printed versions.

Copyright © 2015 OCR. All rights reserved.

#### Copyright

OCR retains the copyright on all its publications, including the specifications. However, registered centres for OCR are permitted to copy material from this specification booklet for their own internal use.

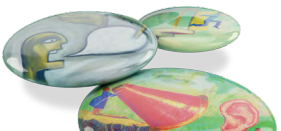
Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered company number 3484466.

Registered office: 1 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2EU

OCR is an exempt charity.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 4
Curriculum Content	Page 5
Thinking Conceptually	Page 6
Thinking Contextually	Page 7
Learner Resources	Page 10



# Introduction

Delivery Guides are designed to represent a body of knowledge about teaching a particular topic and contain:

- Content: A clear outline of the content covered by the delivery guide;
- Thinking Conceptually: Expert guidance on the key concepts involved, common difficulties students may have, approaches to teaching that can help students understand these concepts and how this topic links conceptually to other areas of the subject;
- Thinking Contextually: A range of suggested teaching activities using a variety of themes so that different activities can be selected that best suit particular classes, learning styles or teaching approaches.

If you have any feedback on this Delivery Guide or suggestions for other resources you would like OCR to develop, please email [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk).

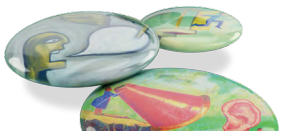
## KEY



Click to view associated resources within this document.



Click to view external resources



# Curriculum Content

## **Poetry – AS: Paper 2, Section B The Language of Literary Texts**

### **A Level Paper 2, Section A The Language of Poetry and Plays**

At both AS and A Level, this examined unit asks students to analyse the use and impact of poetic and stylistic techniques, demonstrating how meaning and effects are created.

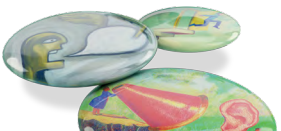
**Topic:** Jacob Sam-La Rose, selected poems

Key skills:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a substantial poetry collection.
- Apply relevant methods for text analysis, drawing on linguistic and literary techniques.
- Explore how linguistic and literary approaches can inform interpretations of texts.
- Identify how meanings and effects are created and conveyed in texts.
- Analyse the ways in which a poetry text draws on its literary, cultural and stylistic contexts.

At AS Level the exam asks the candidates to compare two named poems from the collection they have been studying.

At A Level the exam asks the candidates to compare the named poem with one or two others of their choice from the collection they have been studying.



# Thinking Conceptually

This examined unit requires the students to read the following fifteen poems written by Jacob Sam-La Rose: "Song for a Spent 100w Bulb", "Talk This Way", "Make Some Noise", "Magnitude", "Turning Darker Still", "After Lazerdrome, McDonalds, Peckham Rye", "Speechless I, II, III, IV, V", "An Undisclosed Fortune", "Plummeting", "A Spell for Forgetting a Father", "Here, Spirits".

In this Language and Literature specification, the students will analyse how meanings are shaped in poetry, exploring how the poet uses poetic and stylistic techniques to present ideas. They will focus on the way in which meaning is created through the use of pattern making and pattern breaking, (deviation) and through repetition.

This analysis will require the students to have an awareness of phonology, lexis and semantics, grammar and morphology, pragmatics and discourse.

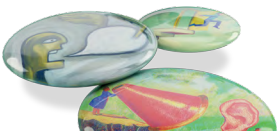
They will also analyse the connections between the poems, and explore the influence of context on the poems. The context may be the literary context (the way in which the poem uses the conventions of a particular genre, for example), or the broader social or historical context.

## **Conceptual links to other parts of the specification:**

In common with AS Paper 2, Section A (The Language of Prose), and A Level Paper 3, Section A (Reading as a Writer, Writing as a Reader), this paper requires the students to think about how the texts are constructed, rather than simply analysing the themes, for example. The focus might be on how the choice of first person narrator shapes the meaning of the poem, for instance, rather than on who that narrator actually is.

The students closely analyse the language of poetry through poetic and stylistic techniques, and this is a useful skill that can be applied to other AS and A Level units. The knowledge they gain about the way in which language works, the effects that it creates, and the way in which it can be used, is also an excellent basis for the students' own written work at A Level, and for any analysis that they do of either spoken or written texts in almost any genre.

An understanding of the relevance of context is essential to any study that requires students to think about the purpose or audience of the text (particularly relevant in the exploration of the texts in the anthology in AS and A Level Paper 1, for example).



# Thinking Contextually

In this Unit, the students are already required to make connections between two named poems (AS) or between one named poem and one or two poems of their choice (A Level), and this process of finding connections is part of thinking contextually. The candidates are exploring the poem in the light of at least one other poem in the collection, and are therefore thinking about the patterns that emerge or the patterns that are broken in terms of the poet's choice of lexis, syntax etc.

An awareness of the broader context of other genres is also required in order that the students can see how the poet breaks or follows those conventions.

Some knowledge of wider social or historical context may be useful, if that context affects the grammatical, or lexical choices made by the poet.

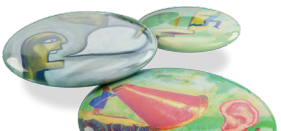
The following activities in this guide are examples of the way in which the context of the poems can be explored:

Activity 1 – overview of poems and themes, exploring reasons why the extracts from other writers have been chosen to preface each section of *Breaking Silence*.

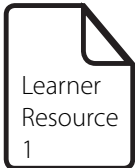

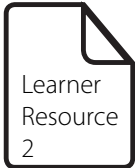

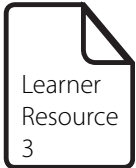

Activity 3 – analysis of "Speechless V" through a comparison with other versions of the poem.

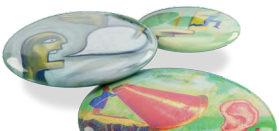
Activity 5 – exploration of poetic and stylistic techniques evident in "Talk This Way", with reference to Sam-La Rose's on-line presence.

Activity 6 – comparison of "Here, Spirits" and "A Spell for Forgetting a Father", directly requiring the students to think about the wider context and references to other Sam-La Rose poems.






# Thinking Contextually

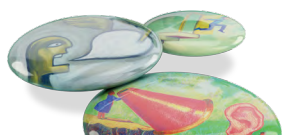
Activities	Resources
<p><b>1. Introduction and Overview (AO3, AO4)</b></p> <p>This activity encourages the students to begin to think about characteristics of Sam-La Rose's poems, as they analyse the extracts that preface each section in <i>Breaking Silence</i> and match them to themes in Sam-La Rose's poetry. They build on these initial responses, as they then match the theme to the title of three poems. It would then be possible to represent these ideas in a diagrammatic form for a wall display, to which the students could add as they learn more about Sam-La Rose's poetry.</p> <p>For a useful overview of the concerns and interests of Sam-La Rose see his website: <a href="http://jacobsamlarose.com/">http://jacobsamlarose.com/</a></p> <p>This activity naturally leads to Activity 2 that focuses on the poetic and stylistic techniques evident in Sam-La Rose's poetry, building on the introduction to his themes.</p>	<div data-bbox="1742 483 1877 651">  <p>Learner Resource 1</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1733 683 1890 778">  </div>
<p><b>2. Lexis and form (AO1, AO2, AO4) with a focus on "Song for a Spent 100w Bulb"</b></p> <p>In this activity the students analyse adjectives and nouns taken out of context, from "Song" and from Shakespeare's Sonnet Number 7. In their exploration of the two lists of words, the students begin to see the concrete, domestic nature of the "Song" and appreciate the development (from light to dark, from past to present etc) that is clear in both poems. They then go on to think about the nature of an ode, and to what extent this poem is an ode, and to what extent it is the "song" of the title. They finish with an overview of the poem that could take the form of a table or a diagram.</p> <p>This activity naturally leads to Activity 3 where the students draw on their knowledge of the characteristic poetic and stylistic techniques used by Sam-La Rose in order to analyse how the meaning is shaped in different versions of the same poem.</p> <p>For a reading of "Song for a Spent 100W Bulb" see: <a href="http://www.poetrystation.org.uk/search/poets/jacob-sam-la-rose">http://www.poetrystation.org.uk/search/poets/jacob-sam-la-rose</a></p>	<div data-bbox="1742 815 1877 983">  <p>Learner Resource 2</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1733 1015 1890 1110">  </div>
<p><b>3. Lexis and structure, with a focus on "Speechless V" (AO2, AO4)</b></p> <p>In this activity the students compare a transcript of the performed poem, with the print version in <i>Breaking Silence</i>. They are encouraged to think, in particular, about the structure of the poem and the use of speech and figurative language as they look at what has changed from one poem to the other. They then go on to have a class debate about the editorial decision not to include the first and last verses of this poem in the printed version in <i>Breaking Silence</i>. They work in small groups with guidance before they begin their whole-group discussion.</p> <p>This activity would work well as a preface to Activity 5, which asks the students to start to bring their analysis of Sam-La Rose's poetic and stylistic techniques together.</p> <p>There are several different performed versions of this poem; one version can be found at: <a href="https://speechlesstour.wordpress.com/">https://speechlesstour.wordpress.com/</a></p>	<div data-bbox="1742 1147 1877 1315">  <p>Learner Resource 3</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1733 1347 1890 1442">  </div>





# Thinking Contextually

Activities	Resources
<p><b>4. Rhythm and structure, with a focus on “Plummeting” (AO1, AO2)</b></p> <p>In this activity the students are asked to find the poem that has been re-written as a paragraph. In order to do this, they need to make decisions about line length and metre etc. In their comparison with the original, the students will discover that Sam-La Rose makes apparently unusual choices about where to break the line. After a brief task that asks them to find as many words as they can in the word “Plummeting”, it becomes clear why Sam-La Rose has made the choices that he has, and the students may then think further about how the metre and form shape the poem’s meaning.</p> <p>This activity could be used before Activity 6, (one that brings the strands of analysis together, but still with some support and guidance).</p>	
<p><b>5. Poetic and stylistic analysis, with a focus on “Talk This Way” (AO1, AO2, AO4)</b></p> <p>After an introductory activity in which the students think about aspects of Sam-La Rose’s website and how they might be relevant to the poetry they are studying, the students work in groups in order to analyse the poetry, but with support.</p> <p>This activity is a precursor to Activity 6: it asks the students to analyse metre, structure, form, imagery, symbolism, lexis, voice, context, grammar and rhyme of a single poem. Activity 6 asks the students to do the same, but in a comparison of two poems.</p>	
<p><b>6. Bringing it all together in an exam-type question (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4), with a focus on “A Spell for Forgetting a Father” and “Here, Spirits”</b></p> <p>In addition to the activity offered in the Learner Resource, these two tables could be used in many ways in the classroom. They could be used after the students have done their own analysis, who could then annotate the tables to add in their own ideas. The students could use them to help to think about the structure for their essay, numbering the boxes and discussing whether they agree as a class. They could work in groups, taking the notes as a starting point in order to produce a presentation on one of the poems, or on a comparison of the poems, to the rest of the class. They could be encouraged to do further research as PowerPoint slides for their presentations.</p> <p>This activity is designed to be done later on in the study of Sam-La Rose, as it presumes that the students have an understanding of the terminology and of his characteristic use of language.</p>	



# Learner Resource 1 Introduction and overview (AO3, AO4)

See  
page 8

## Activity 1

In *Breaking Silence*, each of the four sections is prefaced with a quote. In pairs, read the quotes and summarise each in a single word:

1. "In the darkness it's hard to tell who is listening and who is speaking", Philip Levine "In the Dark", from *The Simple Truth*
2. "At another time, I'd favor fire's gorgeous predatory flame, shape-shifting as it moves, creating its own terms", Stephen Dunn "Luminescence", from *What Goes On: Selected and New Poems 1995–2009*
3. "I am the music you were born to  
Then you put me aside, wanting your own", Stephen Dobyns "Silence", from *Velocities: New and Selected Poems*
4. "Come home.  
The earth utters  
To the body, and so the body does  
Come home – at last" David Baker "The Rumor", from *Never-Ending Birds*.

Now look at these categories (adapted from various websites that feature Sam-La Rose's poetry):

- Identity
- Imagination and fantasy
- Loss and memory
- States of mind
- Race and heritage
- Masculinity and manhood
- Power and value of the voice.

In pairs, or individually, check whether you have used these words to summarise the quotes above. Add to your summaries, adding the words from the list to the appropriate section.

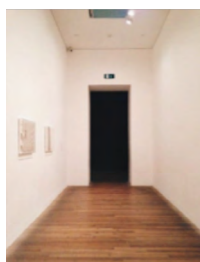
Now decide in which section you would place a poem entitled:

1. "Speechless"
2. "A Spell for Forgetting a Father"
3. "Here, Spirits"

Discuss, as a class, whether you agree or disagree with each others' choices.

You may choose to divide into groups to create a wall display, focusing on one section for each group. You could choose to feature one of the four photos below (taken from <http://www.jsamlarose.com/>), the prefacing quote and the categories that seem relevant.

As you learn more about this collection of poems, you could add the poems onto the display, with an explanation of how/whether they link in terms of theme etc.



# Learner Resource 2 Lexis and form (AO1, AO2, AO4) with a focus on “Song for a Spent 100w Bulb”

See  
page 8

## Activity 2

Below are two lists of adjectives taken from two poems by two different poets. In pairs, or individually, what links can you see between the two lists?

Can you tell what each poem is about?

Can you see a development in the poems; a turning point, perhaps?

### Poem 1

Gracious  
Burning  
New-appearing  
Sacred  
Heavenly  
Strong  
Golden  
High-most  
Weary  
Feeble  
Low

### Poem 2

Bright  
Costly  
Little  
Bulbed  
Searing  
Feverish  
Cooling  
Dying  
Milky glass  
Hot soft  
Blind

Now look at the list of nouns, and tick the abstract nouns:

### Poem 1

Head  
Eye  
Homage  
Sight  
Majesty  
Hill  
Youth  
Middle age  
Looks  
Beauty  
Pilgrimage  
Car  
Age  
Day  
Eyes  
Tract  
Way  
Noon  
Son

### Poem 2

Mother  
Appetite  
Mains  
Ceiling  
Sun  
Mic  
Light  
Face  
Dark  
After-image  
Memory  
Shell  
Filament  
Palm  
Note

What do you notice about the numbers of abstract nouns in poem 1 and poem 2?



# Learner Resource 2

Now compare these two versions of the poem:

1.

Too *gracious* to live long,  
too *burning*, my mother feared  
Your appetite, guzzling the mains,  
hung from the ceiling, *new-appearing* sun  
I rhymed into, close as I could stand,  
imagining the *sacred* head of a mic,  
*strong* fistful of *heavenly* light  
against my face – suddenly emptied,  
plinked out, no longer able to beat back  
the dark, capable only of *golden*  
after-image of *weary*  
memory, *low* glass shell  
and filament jangle, capable of  
being rolled in a boy's *feeble* palm, singing  
one *low*, *blind* note.

2.

Too *bright* to live long,  
too *costly*, my mother feared  
Your appetite, guzzling the mains,  
hung from the ceiling, *little* sun  
I rhymed into, close as I could stand,  
imagining the *bulbed* head of a mic,  
*searing* fistful of *feverish* light  
against my face – suddenly emptied,  
plinked out, no longer able to beat back  
the dark, capable only of *cooling*  
after-image of *dying*  
memory, *milky* glass shell  
and filament jangle, capable of  
being rolled in a boy's *hot* palm, singing  
one *soft*, *blind* note.

How does the choice of adjectives alter the tone of the poem?

Look at these defining characteristics of a modern, irregular ode:

- It celebrates a subject, person, animal etc
- It was originally written in exalted language
- It is a lyric poem, including sensory detail
- It takes the form of an address
- It is usually written in irregular or varied metre
- It is of moderate length

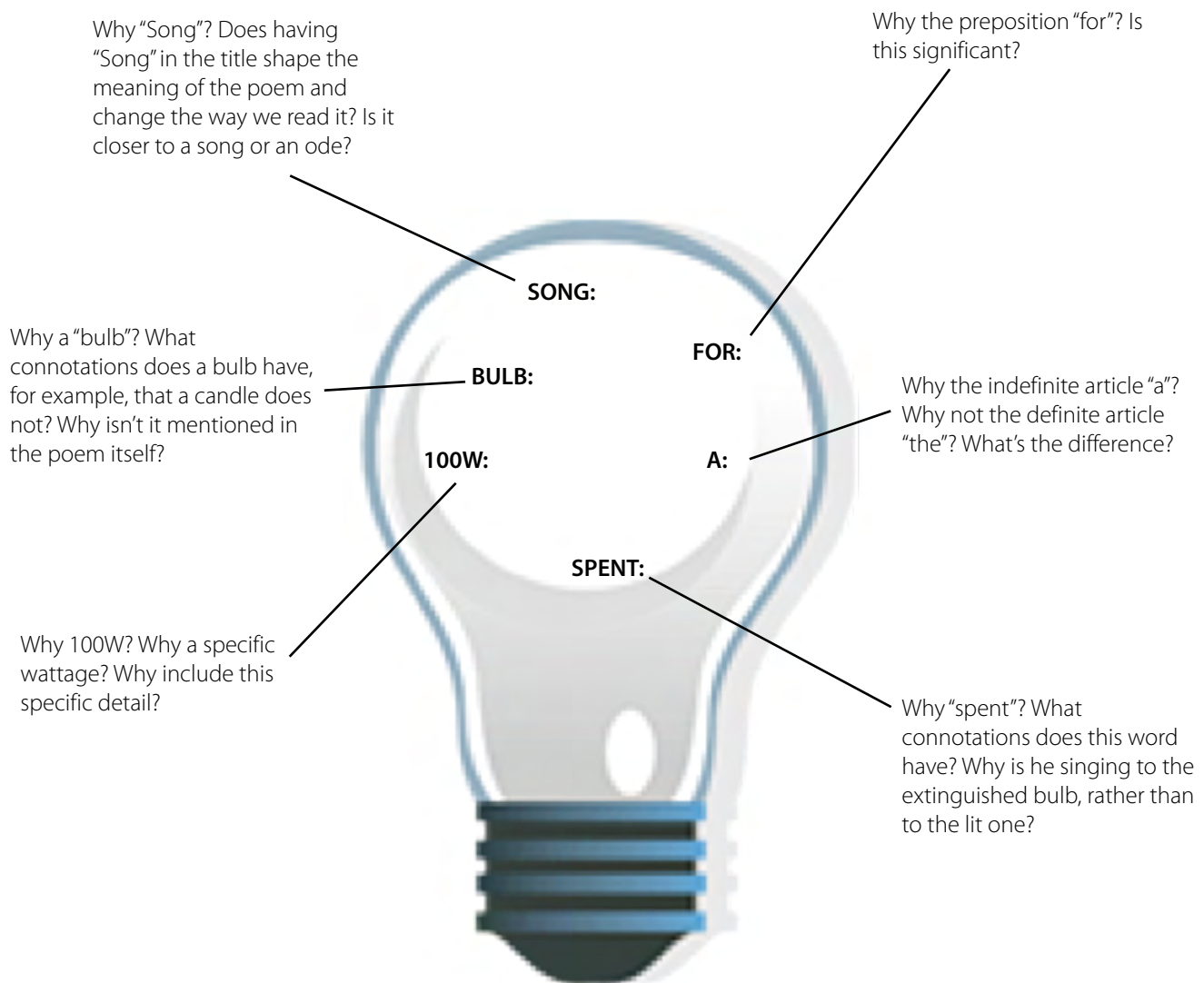
Discuss whether Version 1 or Version 2 more neatly fits this definition. Vote on whether you think Version 2 is an ode or not.



# Learner Resource 2

Now pull apart the title:

Each group of three is responsible for one word from the title of this poem:



As a class, discuss what relationship the title has with the poem. Does it shape the meaning of the poem? If so, in what way?

# Learner Resource 3 Lexis and structure, with a focus on "Speechless V" (AO2, AO4)



## Activity 3

Sam-La Rose is well-known on the British Performance Poetry circuit, staging his own poetry, and also for his work with performance programmes for all ages.

At the Cuirt International Festival in Galway, 28 April 2012, he enacted a poem he entitled "Dumb". In *Breaking Silence*, this poem appears as "Speechless V".

As a class, discuss the connotations that the words "Dumb" and "Speechless V" have. What expectations does each title raise about the poem that follows it?

Often the words in a poem in performance are not fixed, and there are several different versions of "Speechless V", for example, on the Internet.

Your task, in pairs, is to compare one version of Sam-La Rose's performance of this poem with the poem in *Breaking Silence*, focusing, in particular, on the following examples:

<i>Breaking Silence</i>	Cuirt Festival
<b>This first verse is omitted</b>	"There's a girl in class who refuses to speak Behind her back a teacher mouths "problems at home", And who knows what too large or brutal vision stalled the engine of her voice. Today the challenge is to write about the things that we believe in."
Lines 18-23: "... the girl that lacks patience to raise her hand before speaking will compare herself to a broken slot machine in the basement of a pub, inside out and forgotten in the widening fissure between her parents."	"... the girl that lacks patience to raise her hand before speaking will come to describe herself as a juke box, a broken juke box in the corner of the room That no one listens to Faulty, inside out and forgotten in the widening fissure between her parents."
Line 34: "I'll cherish the look on his face"	<b>Line omitted</b>
<b>This last verse is omitted</b>	"And still that girl in class she refuses to speak Praise her fierce and stubborn silence Somewhere, somewhere else in the world rain will fall on dry land For the first time in months And I want to know what her first words will be."

You could use these questions to guide you:

- How does having the focus on the girl who refuses to speak change the structure of the poem?
- How does the inclusion of the first and last verses change the subject matter of the poem?
- The relative pronoun "who" is used in the first verse (Cuirt Festival), and the relative pronoun "that" is used in line 18. What difference does this make in terms of shaping the meaning of this poem?
- In "Dumb", direct speech is ascribed to the teacher; in "Speechless V" direct speech is ascribed to the students. What difference does this make to the meaning of the poem?



# Learner Resource 3

- What qualities does a slot machine have, and what qualities does a juke box have? Do they have similar or different connotations?
- In “Dumb” in lines 18–23 there are more post-modifying phrases than in “Speechless V”. How does their inclusion shape the meaning of this poem?

Divide the class into two teams. Each team will argue for either the inclusion or the exclusion of the two additional verses. Work in pairs to start your discussion, deciding on three reasons to support your side of the argument. Then get together into a group of four to compare your ideas, before running this as a whole group debate.

You might use these points to start your discussion:

The inclusion of the additional verse at the start of the poem ...

- highlights the subject matter of the poem from the start
- reinforces the power of the teacher who is attributed speech
- creates a sense of collaboration between the poet and the teacher: figures of authority communicating with one another about the student “behind her back”
- changes the tone of the poem with the adjectives “large” and “brutal” - providing a reason for her silence
- uses the lexical group of engines and stalling that are repeated throughout the poem
- introduces the voice of the poet through free, indirect discourse (“Today the challenge is...”)
- the free indirect discourse of the poet (“Today the challenge is...”) echoes the tone of line six (reported speech of the teachers), marking the division between the educators and the students.

The inclusion of the additional verse at the end of the poem...

- creates a cyclical structure in its return to the girl as the focalisation
- the repeated syntax “refuses to speak” reinforces the sense of circularity
- contrasts to the rest of the poem in its reference to a world beyond that which the students can see
- contrasts with the rest of the poem as it implicitly addresses the reader in the imperative “Praise...”
- shifts the tense back into the present, rather than the projected future of verses 7–11
- ends the poem with a declarative sentence of intention “And I want”, contrasting to the less certain modal “could” in the final verse of “Speechless V”
- uses figurative language in the text of the poem, rather than in “Speechless V” where the only figurative language is present in the students’ work.



# Learner Resource 4 Rhythm and structure, with a focus on “Plummeting” (AO1, AO2)



## Activity 4

Read the following two sentences:

He works it, ear accustomed to the tune of hard play: left, right, launch-step, discipline like a lump of lead in his pocket he can melt into gold. Keeps on until the sky turns plum, sporting a corona of sweat like a plume of peacock’s feathers, stoking the fire in each lung as proof against the failing light and time passing; left, right, launch-step, pelting ball at hoop, deep bone-ache for the sweet line from hand to flawless, unimpeachable plunge.

In pairs, or individually, your task is to make this into a poem.

- You may choose to include every word, or you may choose to select only those images that you think are particularly poetic.
- You need to think about the length of each line of your poem.
- You need, therefore, to think about how many syllables each line will have.
- You might consider the number of stresses you place in each line: do you want equal numbers of stresses, or do you think some lines require more stresses than others?
- You might think about the narrative of this poem; do you want to change the order of the images, or are you happy with the development that takes place?
- Is the repetition of “left, right, launch-step” important, or will you decide to edit one out?
- When you are content with your poem, give it a title that you think best encapsulates what the poem is about.

Now turn to the poem “Plummeting”. First in pairs, and then in a whole class discussion, compare the poems that you have created with the original version, and highlight what surprises you about Sam-La Rose’s choices.

You might use the following questions to guide your discussion:

1. The lines of “Plummeting” are irregular; why?
2. The stresses are particularly frequent in lines 2 and 8. Why? How does the repeated stress shape the meaning of the poem?
3. Line 3 has the fewest stresses. Why?
4. The heaviest number of stresses per word lie in the final verse. Why?
5. Enjambment is used eight times in this eleven-line poem. Why?
6. The contrast of lexis from the low frequency, high register “flawless, unimpeachable plunge” to the monosyllabic “rim’s wide mouth” is dramatic. Why does Sam-La Rose insert a verse break between the two phrases?
7. There is a development from the ear and music in verse one, to the mute mouth in the final verse. What other images indicate a progression in this poem?
8. The final words in each line appear to be slant or eye rhymes (“lump”, “plum” and “plume”, for example). Is there anything else you notice about these words?

Divide into groups of three, take the word “Plummeting”, and work in your team to see how many words you can create from the letters in this word.





# Learner Resource 4

Now check whether you have included: “tune, lump, melt, plum, plume, lung, time, pelting, line, plunge, mute”.



# Learner Resource 5 Poetic and stylistic analysis, with a focus on “Talk This Way” (AO1, AO2, AO4)



## Activity 5

Sam-La Rose’s website includes links and hyperlinks to, among other things, other writers.

Below are three extracts taken from Sam-La Rose’s website. In pairs, read the extracts and summarise each in no more than one sentence:

1. Words, English words, are full of echoes, of memories, of associations — naturally. They have been out and about, on people’s lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields, for so many centuries. And that is one of the chief difficulties in writing them today — that they are so stored with meanings, with memories ...

Virginia Woolf, “Craftsmanship”, published posthumously in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942).

2. Listing and searching both provide us with ways, however flawed, to cut through redundancy, to make meaning out of chaos, to, in Sontag’s vocabulary, confer and create “value”, even “existence”.

Jeremy Schmidt and Jacquelyn Ardam, “On Excess: Susan Sontag’s Born-Digital Archive”, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 26 October 2014.

3. ... ‘Cause she knew what she was doin’  
Taught me how to walk this way

She told me to

Walk this way, talk this way

Walk this way, talk this way

Walk this way, talk this way

Walk this way, talk this way

Ah, just give me a kiss...

Aerosmith, 1977 (extract from a song about a boy being physically educated by a girl. Each verse is followed by the chorus “Walk this way, talk this way”...)

Now read “Talk This Way” out aloud in the class.

Pick one of the extracts, and explain its link to the poem.

Discuss, as a class, whether the extracts helped you to understand the poem, or directed you to a certain reading of the poem, perhaps distracting you from your initial interpretation.

## Dismantling the poem:

Divide students into four groups.

### Group One

Group One is responsible for looking at the verbs and verb phrases: pressed (x2), once removed, smuggled, loosed, melting, birthed, spanked, find.

- Are there any patterns or links that you can find in this list?
- Why do you think there are so few verbs or verb phrases (9 in total) in this 134-word poem?
- Is there a development or turning point evident in this list of verbs?
- Do you think your analysis of verbs has been affected by the extracts you read at the start?



# Learner Resource 5

## Group Two

Group Two is responsible for looking at nouns or noun phrases: boys, road, girls, bus top decks, love letters, vinyl platters, Americas, Jamaica, East End, Queen['s] seams, sun, Guyanese sky, received pronunciation, music (x3), motherland, folds, skirts, blouses, leather suitcase, bones, flying fish, guava cheese, casrip, bottles, cauldron, pit, brogue, heights, spaces, silence, tongues.

- Are there any patterns or links that you can find in this list?
- What do you notice about the number of noun phrases there are? What is your theory for this?
- How many abstract v concrete nouns are there? How does this shape the meaning of the poem?
- Why are there several proper nouns in this poem? Why are they important?
- What do "casrip", "cassava bread" and "flying fish" have in common with one another? How does the inclusion of these noun phrases and nouns shape the meaning of the poem?
- Do you think your analysis of the extracts has affected your understanding of Sam-La Rose's choice of nouns?

## Group Three

Group Three is responsible for looking at adjectives: vinyl, cool, clipped, sharp, high, raw, unfettered, old-fashioned, hard, spilt, broken, molten, wailing, empty.

- Are there any patterns or links that you can find in this list?
- Can you see any change of tone from the adjectives in the first half of the list to those in the last half?
- How does Sam-La Rose's use of adjectives shape the meaning of the poem?
- Do you think your analysis of the extracts has affected your understanding of Sam-La Rose's choice of adjectives?

## Group Four

Group Four is responsible for looking at syntax and punctuation; for example: one twenty-line, elliptical sentence, followed by a second single-line elliptical sentence.

- Why does Sam-La Rose use this construction?
- What relationship do the two elliptical sentences have with one another?
- Why does Sam-La Rose use dashes? What do they precede?
- How does Sam-La Rose's use of syntax and punctuation shape the meaning of this poem?
- Do you think your analysis of syntax and punctuation has been affected by the extracts you read at the start?

Using your analysis: Choose one of the sentences below to write a paragraph of an essay on "Talk This Way":

1. This poem echoes the title of the Aerosmith song "Walk This Way" (a song about a young man growing up and being instructed how to "talk this way, walk this way" by a cheer leader) and similarly marks a rite of passage. This is clear through the use of adjectives that indicate...
2. This poem shows an equal respect for every aspect of the speaker's culture. The use of nouns illustrates this by...
3. The process of writing this poem echoes the process of rejecting the instruction to "Talk this way" instead of finding a voice. The use of the syntax illustrates this by ...
4. In a poem about finding a voice, this poem uses lexis associated with sound and silence and plays graphologically with space. The use of nouns illustrates this by ...
5. This is a poem peppered with gaps and absences: the absence of the speaker in the title; the gap between the present in verse one, and the past in verse two, with the silence that precedes the final verse that looks to the future. The patterns evident in the verbs show ...



# Learner Resource 5

As a final exercise, look at the transcript of Sam-La Rose talking on the Poetry Station:

"This poem's titled "Talk This Way" which references an old Run DMC hip-hop crossover track. The poem really pays homage to the various different aspects of my own voice. The various different parts of my heritage from Guyana through my upbringing in London, through the forms of subculture I was really interested in: hip-hop, drum and bass and many other things. I love this poem personally from my own collection. I love this for the musicality of it, for the way that it references the different aspects of my identity and my character through sound."

Jacob Sam-La Rose, <http://poetrystation.org.uk/>

Now look at the following four words taken from the clip:

- Heritage
- Musicality
- Identity
- Voice.

As a class, rank these in terms of their relevance to the poem. Negotiate as a whole class, arguing for your own ranking order.



# Learner Resource 6

Bringing it all together, with a focus on “A Spell for Forgetting a Father” and “Here, Spirits” (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4)



## Activity 6

In the exam you are asked to compare two poems. This activity poses the following exam-type question:

- Explore how Jacob Sam-La Rose presents ideas and feelings about loss and memory in “A Spell for Forgetting a Father” and “Here, Spirits”.

You should consider his use of stylistic techniques, as well as any other relevant contexts.

Below are two tables to help you to find ideas for your essay. Divide the class in two groups: one group is responsible for completing Table One and the other for completing Table Two.

Once you have completed your half of the table, you can either take it in turns to provide feedback to the class, or swap one of your completed tables with another pair, so that you have the two halves to refer to when you write your essay.

**Table One:**

A Spell for Forgetting a Father	Here, Spirits
<b>Voice:</b> implied first person narrator, with second person pronoun “you will need” - addressed to the reader. Emulating the detached voice of the instruction manual or advice leaflet.	
<b>Lexical groups:</b> candles - candle, feathers - feather's - feather (x4) - wings (x3), name (x2), sun - sun's - shadow, height - air - ground (x2) - bury, light - lifting - weight, lay - lie, full (x2), falls - fall. Indicating the oppositions of light and dark, of air and ground, with the lightness and air representing escape from the memories of his father. Concrete nouns throughout - reinforcing idea of logical steps of instruction manual.	
<b>Context:</b> Echoes of myth of Icarus and his father (who escaped from the labyrinth by making two pairs of wings from feathers and wax. Icarus refused to listen to his father's advice, and flew so close to the sun that the heat melted the wax, the wings disintegrated, and Icarus drowned) - the myth perhaps linked to the sense of loss, and of separation of father and son in this poem.  Characteristic concern of absent father figure, seen, for example, in “Never”, “Drummer” etc.	



# Learner Resource 6

A Spell for Forgetting a Father	Here, Spirits
<p><b>Syntax:</b> Repeated syntax of imperative sentences ("Find a place ... inscribe ... light them ... lay them ... keep ... lie back ... imagine ... hold ... say ... let ... leave ... bury" – imitating the language of instruction that directly addresses the reader. Imperatives are softened in the declarative sentence "Your wings can be ..." and in the left-branching dependent clause "As the sun's light...")</p> <p>Verbs – predominantly dynamic verbs in the present tense – imitating the instruction leaflet, (conventionally written in the present tense) – no past tense verbs, perhaps indicating the speaker's intention to move on from the past.</p> <p>Melding of imagery associated with spells with the structure and conventions of an instruction manual.</p> <p>Inserted "incantation" with archaic, inverted syntax and lexis to emulate the language of spells (italicised to separate it from the poem itself).</p>	
<p><b>Figurative language:</b> "strong head for heights" – idiomatic collocation, used here to suggest spiritual heights rather than physical ones.</p> <p>Reference to the "nib" (rather than the technical term "quill") of the feather, drawing attention to the creation of the poem. Candle conventionally symbolises purification and cleansing – here, the cleansing of emotion or memory; feather conventionally symbolises spiritual change – here, the shedding of the memories of his father.</p> <p>Figurative language present in the extract from Terrance Hayes – establishing the subject matter of the Sam-La Rose poem. Italicisation separates it from Sam-La Rose's poem – implying a shared, common experience of an absent father.</p>	



# Learner Resource 6

**Table Two:**

A Spell for Forgetting a Father	<p>Here, Spirits</p> <p><b>Voice:</b> first person narrator, presumably male (reference to “boy”). Conversational tone with incomplete idiomatic sentences “Hard to shift...” and abbreviations “It’s years since...” Mixed register of the conversational with the low frequency lexis of “libations” etc.</p> <p>Verse seven uses a form of free-indirect discourse as the discussion is reported.</p> <p>Form: three line verses, generally unrhymed, with a half rhyme of “say” and “boy” that draws attention to the voice of the aunt – linking her voice to the verb “say”. Circular structure: starting with the noodle, moving through the past, and two linked memories, and back to the noodle and the present. The prayer is now offered to the “you” of the present: the beliefs of the speaker’s relatives re-emerge in the form of this poem.</p>
	<p><b>Lexical groups:</b> noodle (x2) – table – chopsticks – mouth – food – rice – kitchen floor – forks – spoons – pea – chicken – carrot, spirits (x3) – offerings – libations – phantom – prayer (x2). Indicating the opposition of the domestic and the spiritual, the present and the past, and the inseparability of the two.</p> <p>Verbs: meets, raised, say (x2), feeding, hit, shift, divert, heard, woke up, turn, switch, passed, want, know, take, ask, challenge – predominantly present tense, notable in “What the spirits want, they know to take...” indicating the ongoing nature of the spirit activity. Move from the present to the past in his recollection of his aunt, but the direct speech of his aunt is in the present tense: the immediacy of the memory emerging.</p> <p>Pronoun “you” to indicate a second character in the present of this poem, joining the aunt, mother and uncle from the past.</p>



# Learner Resource 6

A Spell for Forgetting a Father	Here, Spirits
	<p><b>Context:</b> Evident links between this poem and others by Jacob Sam-La Rose: "A Spell for Forgetting a Father", in which magic promises a cure for his pain, for example, or "Song for a Spent 100w Bulb" where a memory from the past forms the central metaphor of the poem. Possible echoes of "Come, you spirits" – Lady Macbeth calling on the power of the supernatural and of the spirits. Echoes of the syntax of superstition "one for sorrow" etc in "a pea for a prayer... chicken for provision" – the world of the ritual juxtaposed with the domestic (the past and the present).</p>
	<p><b>Syntax:</b> Ambiguity of syntax of the title; the lack of verb leaves the meaning open: "Come here spirits" (echoing the Shakespearean "Come, you spirits") or "Here are spirits" – reinforcing the sense of the intertwined present and past, domestic and spiritual. Echoes of the idiomatic "high spirits" – spirits that will not be confined to the past.</p> <p>Parallel syntax of "a pea // for... a tear of chicken for ... a fleck of carrot for ..." – sense of incantation: parody of the voice of the aunt, perhaps.</p> <p>Parallel syntax of noun phrases: jot of noodle, tear of chicken, fleck of carrot – emphasising the minute nature of these offerings to the spirits in poetic, figurative phrases.</p>
	<p><b>Figurative language:</b> Personification of the noodle which "meets" the table and is an "escapee" – creates a sense of uncontrollable nature of both the food and also the spirits. Metaphor of the rice: "some solid form of libation" – contrast of monosyllabic domestic present ("the plate of rice that hit...") and polysyllabic lexis of religion. Metaphoric wreathing of the "phantom mouths", encircling the ankles of the speaker – threatening and skilful ("deft") – very much part of the present.</p>







We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

If you do not currently offer this OCR qualification but would like to do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Form which can be found here: [www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest](http://www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest)

#### **OCR Resources: *the small print***

OCR's resources are provided to support the teaching of OCR specifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by the Board and the decision to use them lies with the individual teacher. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

© OCR 2015 - This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this message remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:

Jacob Sam-La Rose "Song for a Spent 100W Bulb" and *Breaking Silence* (Bloodaxe Books, 2011), reproduced with permission of Bloodaxe Books on behalf of the author ([www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com)). "Luminescence/Seriousness". Copyright © 1998 by Stephen Dunn, from *What Goes On: Selected and New Poems 1995-2009* by Stephen Dunn. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Photos from [www.jsamlarose.com](http://www.jsamlarose.com), used by permission of Jacob Sam-La Rose. "The Rumor", from *Never-Ending Birds* by David Baker. Copyright © 2009 by David Baker. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

## OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)



For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.

©OCR 2015 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England.  
Registered office 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.