

Learner Resource 2 Stylistic analysis: overview, rhyme, rhythm and form with a focus on *Hour* (AO1, AO2, AO3)

Divide into four groups. Each group is responsible for looking at one aspect of *Hour*.

Group One: Verbs

Looking at this list of verbs out of context of the poem, can you see any links between them? As a group, discuss what this poem might be about.

Makes, find, spend, kiss, turning, slows, backhanding, will end, hold, hung, see, lit, hates, wants, spins.

Group Two: Nouns and noun phrases

Looking at this list of nouns and noun phrases out of context of the poem, can you see any links between them? As a group, discuss what this poem might be about.

Love's time's beggar, hour, coin, love, hour, flowers, wine, sky, ditch, secrets, hair, treasure, ground, light, limbs, gold, Time, millionaires, night, hour, jewel, candles, cuckoo spit, blade of grass, ear, chandelier, spotlight, Time, love (x3), gold (x3), straw.

Group Three: Adjectives

Looking at this list of adjectives out of context of the poem, can you see any links between them? As a group, discuss what this poem might be about.

Single, bright, rich, dropped, summer, grass, Midas, dark, shining.

Group Four: Pronouns

Looking at this list of personal and possessive pronouns, what type of poem would you expect this to be? What does the repetition of the first person plural pronoun, in particular, suggest, for example?

We, we, your, your, we, our, your, you.

As a class, compare your predictions. Do you agree what this poem is about?

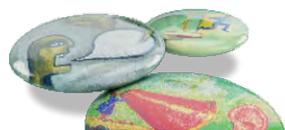
Now read *Hour*. Discuss the accuracy of your predictions. Are there any examples where the meaning of the word is altered in the context of the poem?

In pairs, or individually, study the two lists of nouns and noun phrases below. Mark the links between them (starting with the most obvious, perhaps: love).

Marriage, minds, impediments, love (x2), alteration, remover, mark, tempest, star, bark, height, Love's, Time's fool, lips, cheeks, sickle's compass, Love, hours, weeks, doom, error, man.

Love's time's beggar, hour, coin, love, hour, flower, wine, sky, ditch, seconds, hair, treasure, ground, light, limbs, gold, Time, millionaires, night, hour, jewel, candles, cuckoo spit, blade of grass, ear, chandelier, spotlight, Time, love (x3), gold (x3) straw.

Now look at these two poems side by side:



Learner Resource 2

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O, no! It is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be
 taken
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
 I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Shakespeare's Sonnet 116

Love's time's beggar, but even a single hour,
 bright as a dropped coin, makes love rich.
 We find an hour together, spend it not on flowers
 or wine, but the whole of the summer sky and a grass
 ditch.

For thousands of seconds we kiss; your hair
 like treasure on the ground; the Midas light
 turning your limbs to gold. Time slows, for here
 we are millionaires, backhanding the night

so nothing dark will end our shining hour,
 no jewel hold a candle to the cuckoo spit
 hung from the blade of grass at your ear,
 no chandelier or spotlight see you better lit

than here. Now. Time hates love, wants love poor,
 but love spins gold, gold, gold from straw.

Divide the class into two groups: half the class is responsible for analysing the rhyme scheme of the first sonnet and half is responsible for analysing the rhyme scheme of the second sonnet.

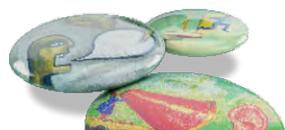
- Mark in full rhymes (also called perfect or true rhymes) in yellow, half rhymes or slant rhymes (also called near or off rhymes: rhymes that are almost but not exact rhymes, such as "love" and "live") in red, eye rhymes (based on words that look the same rather than sound the same; sometimes indicating the change in pronunciation, such as "love" and "remove") and internal rhymes (within a line) in blue.

Having compared your analysis of the two sonnets, it will be clear that they share a rhyme scheme, but it is your task as a class to decide just how closely Duffy follows the structure and form of a Shakespearean sonnet.

You might use the following questions to help start your discussion:

- Does Duffy's use of rhyme differ in any way? If so, how and why? How does her use of rhyme reflect or shape the meaning of the poem?
- What about the metre of each poem? Does Duffy use ten syllables in each line?
- Does she use iambic pentameter? If not, why not? Are there particular lines or verses that do have a regular iambic pentameter? If so, why might Duffy have chosen to use this metre?
- The last two lines of *Hour* are composed of seventeen monosyllabic words; how does this shape the meaning of the poem?

Divide into two teams. One team is responsible for arguing that Duffy adheres to the sonnet form, providing at least three reasons to support your argument. The second team should make the case that Duffy echoes the sonnet form, but makes it her own.



Learner Resource 2

In addition to the work you have already done on the comparison of rhyme schemes, you might begin by thinking about:

- Time as enemy of love (and life) being a common theme in Shakespeare's sonnets.
- Regular structure reflecting the inevitable progression of time.
- Sonnet form as a traditional form of love poetry.
- 18 out of the 52 poems being *Rapture* are 14-line poems.
- A sonnet traditionally sets up the question, proposition or problem in the first two stanzas, and in the ninth line the turn (or 'volta') is a dramatic change in theme or imagery. The volta marks the move from proposition to resolution, with the final couplet summarising the theme or introducing a new way of looking at the theme.

If you have time, read Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*.