

Learner Resource 5 Bringing it all together, with a focus on *You and Over* (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4)

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

- Explore how Carol Ann Duffy presents ideas and feelings about relationships in *You and Over*.

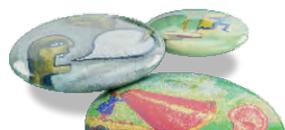
You should consider her use of stylistic techniques, as well as any other relevant contexts.

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 give 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:

<i>You</i>	<i>Over</i>
<p>Voice: First person singular – addressing the loved one (“you”) – but “I” used three times, and “you” appears six times – indicating the preoccupation of the speaker.</p>	
<p>Form: a fourteen-line poem, with an irregular rhyming scheme – suggesting a relationship with a sonnet (a traditional form for love poetry) but with a modern take on it. The final couplets echo the resolution of the sonnet, with a shift into the present tense and to the physical presence of the loved one.</p>	
<p>Lexical groups: Dreams, nature, magic – capturing the idea of love as overpowering and uncontrollable. Contrast with “ordinary”, “routine”, “rooms”.</p>	
<p>Context: First poem in a collection that traces the progression of love from infatuation to break up.</p> <p>Adaptation of sonnet form. Echoes of literary lovers (echoes from <i>Wuthering Heights</i>, for example).</p>	

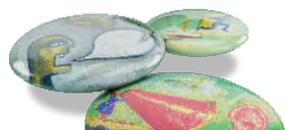


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You	Over
<p>Syntax: Long sentences of verses 1, 2 and 3, contrast with the short, simple sentence “The curtains stir” – foregrounding the shift in the poem. Past tense throughout, also shifts in the final verse.</p> <p>Verbs associated with the loved one are dominating and casual (“stayed too late”, “sprawled”, “staring”, “strolled”) – contrasting with those verbs attached to the speaker (“I went”, “I hid”, “I open”) reflecting the obsessive, controlling nature of the love.</p>	
<p>Rhyme/rhythm: Irregular rhyming scheme (“skin”, “in” and half rhyme of “routine”, for example), and internal half rhymes (“gaze” and “face”) and internal full rhymes (“shapes” and “gapes”) – creating a sense of the confusion between internal and external worlds. The repeated “ll” drawing attention to the connections between “spell”, “kill”, “hell” etc – the destructive nature of love. Sibilance of “soft salt sound” etc echoing the muffled nature of half-wakening.</p>	
<p>Figurative Language: language of spells, fire and tiger – indicating a vulnerability of the speaker in the face of this powerful love. The imagery of the “long grass” provides a link between imagination and reality – linking back to the tiger. Finally, the loved one is a touchable dream – the melding of imagination and reality.</p>	

Table two:

You	Over
	<p>Voice: First person singular – addressing the loved one (“you”) – but “I” used five times, and “you” appears twice, “us” appears once – indicating the fading out of the relationship; the speaker is left alone and is responsible for the verbs.</p>
	<p>Form: An irregular form, with an irregular rhyming scheme – suggesting, perhaps the desperation of the speaker – the loss of love and the rejection of any traditional form of love poetry.</p>



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You	Over
	<p>Lexical groups: Nature, spells – memory as destructive and controlling. Hour (x4) hours (x1) – the interminable passing of slow time, without her loved one. Window, open grave, hinge, key, unlocking – images of escape. Name (x2) – the name is the catalyst for the speaker’s pain. The “flush” of light in the memory is repeated in the “blush” of memory in the final verse in an otherwise colourless poem (“black sky”).</p>
	<p>Context: Last poem in a collection that traces the progression of love from infatuation to break up of a relationship. Wider relationship to literary context of the epigraph from Browning – implication of hope, recapturing the experience through the poem itself.</p>
	<p>Syntax: Parallel syntax of “no stars...no moon...no name or number...no skelf of light” – indicating the absence of all romantic symbols. “I let in air” – simple sentence – transition between mental entrapment and awareness of the outside world (the garden).</p> <p>Use of rhetorical question – lack of answer, with the stanza break drawing attention to that absence.</p> <p>Simple sentences mark transitions from internal to external (“I let in air”) from past to present (“I say your name”).</p>
	<p>Rhyme/rhythm: Suggestion of release from torment in the sibilance of “the garden’s sudden scents”. Irregular rhyming scheme with occasional half (“anonymous” and “hours”) and full rhymes (“prayer” and “air”) and eye rhymes (“grave” and “have”) – becoming increasingly sparse in the final verse, creating a sense of progression, possibly from desperation to hope. Development also evident in the three stanzas of five, six and seven lines respectively – sense of growth.</p>
	<p>Figurative language: Language of spells and prayers – characteristic of Duffy’s love that enchants the speaker – here, there is no spell or prayer. “open grave” – the landscape is a reflection of her state of mind. Death as a “door” representing escape. “blush” in the final line – introduction of colour suggesting hope.</p>

