

# SAOU Poetry Workshop

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE

WORKSHEET 2

Theme – Exploring emotion

Hello

Please complete the following worksheet as a second part of the introduction to the methodology that will be employed during the sessions.

The work to be completed for this Worksheet is based on the Poem, 'The Donkey' by G K Chesterton



In this worksheet you will read about a donkey and see many layers of meaning beneath the actual words. You will also become aware of how the poet creates a variety of heightened but controlled emotions as well as how dangerous it is to make assumptions about a poem before you have explored it fully.

# SAOU Poetry Workshop: WORKSHEET 2

## Towards a working methodology

### Exploring emotion

Poems can teach us to become aware of and be sensitive to, thoughts and emotions in ourselves and others that are not immediately apparent on the surface.



### ***The Donkey***

BY G. K. CHESTERTON

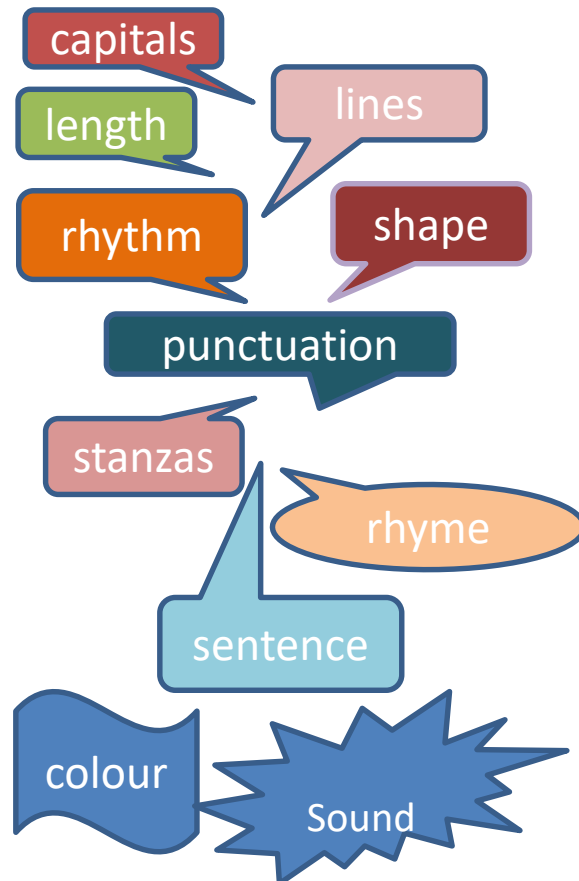
*When fishes flew and forests walked  
And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born.*

*With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.*

*The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,  
I keep my secret still.*

*Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
And palms before my feet.*

<b>Sense-</b>	What is the poem about?
<b>Intention-</b>	Purpose of writing?
<b>Feeling -</b>	What emotions are aroused/explored?
<b>Tone-</b>	What does the poet feel about his subject?



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### Exploring Emotion

#### Tasks to be completed

What do you know about donkeys? Read the following Fact File to gain background.

**FACT FILE** Donkeys come from Africa and the Middle East where they were tamed more than 5000 years ago. These slow animals are used today as work animals in poor countries. They carry materials, plow fields, and draw up water. Donkeys are related to horses and zebras, but they have much larger ears than either one. A donkey's bray can carry up to 60 miles in the desert. A donkey is stronger than a horse of the same size.



#### Infobox

I am = first person  
you are = second person  
he, she, it is = third person

1. Now write down your answers to the following questions.
  - a) What experience do you think the poet has had of donkeys that lead to the writing of the poem?
  - b) Did the poem or the fact file tell you more about the donkey?
  - c) Choose a word or phrase to describe the theme of this poem.
  - d) Did you enjoy the poem? Why? How did it make you feel?

#### Questions 2 and 3 explore the features the poet used for effect

2. Write down your answers to the following questions.
  - a) Is the poem told in the first, second or third person? How can you tell?
  - b) What tense is the poem written in? Give examples.
  - c) What effect do the tense and the narrative voice help to achieve?
  - d) What does "*When fishes flew and forests walked/ And figs grew upon thorn*", mean? Is this a literal or a figurative statement?
  - e) Rephrase the underlined lines from the poem in your own words.
  - f) What figures of speech or poetic devices are used in each one?

Literal  
=  
Dictionary  
meaning



Tip

Figurative language creates an effect beyond the literal meaning of the words: e.g. similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration onomatopoeia

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## Exploring emotion

Poems come in many different forms. Reread the poem and consider it carefully with reference to the words in the speech bubbles on page 1 NB! NB! NB! NB!

Something for you to think about carefully

3. Look at this list of adjectives: complicated stark precise dull unpretentious conversational reflective tense (any other adjective you can think of...).
- Now write down which adjectives describe the language style of the poem.
  - How do the lines running on into each other help to create its 'feel'?
  - What is the effect of the single lines in between the stanzas and at the end?
  - Is the feel and pace of the poem similar all the way through?

What does the word 'feel' mean here?

- 4.
- Why do you think the poem has so little punctuation?
  - What has the poet used in place of punctuation marks?
  - Which punctuation mark is used for dramatic effect in the poem?

### Another infobox...

Poets often use specific rhythms and/or rhyme-schemes to achieve their meaning.

### Did you know?

If a thought or idea finishes at the end of a line with a full stop, this is called an *end-stopped line*.

If a thought spills over from one line into the next without a punctuated pause at the end of the line, it's called *enjambment*.

**Acknowledgement:** The modified ideas and format of this worksheet are based on poetry exercises in the *Cambridge Primary English Learner's Book* by Sally Burt and Debbie Ridgard, ISBN 978-1-107-62866-3