|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Australian Curriculum Year 8 English Year 8 sample assessment ׀ Student booklet  Unlocking the power in poetry |

© The State of Queensland (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) and its licensors 2014. All web links correct at time of publication.

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Image: *Poetry: This was once the Carlton meat locker but poetry lives there now*, V. H. Hammer, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0, [www.flickr.com/photos/vhhammer/8885641187](http://www.flickr.com/photos/vhhammer/8885641187/). |

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this resource contains an image of a person who has passed away.

|  |
| --- |
| Create a series of entries that respond to and discuss poetry in a class blog. You will choose a poem written by an Aboriginal poet or Torres Strait Islander poet which is suitable for close study and that you think you will enjoy exploring. Your blog entries will include visual representations of the poem you have chosen and responses to questions relating to the HOW and the WHAT about your chosen poem, about the ways the poem’s language and techniques influence readers’ feelings and emotions and encourage them to accept particular viewpoints. |
| You will plan and create (write and design) a series of entries for a poetry blog in which you:   * **contribute to the class blog** by writing responses to questions relating to the HOW and the WHAT about your chosen poem * **choose two of your entries** that best represent the depth of your learning (about poetry, Aboriginal cultures and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, evaluative language, communicating with peers, the visual and written conventions of blogging) **to refine and proofread for assessment** * ensure that, combined, these two entries, each one between 300–400 words in length, comprise: * **responses to two questions** about the poem’s meaning and messages **(the WHAT)** * **a visual with a brief explanation** of its significance in terms of **capturing an aspect of what the poem means to you** * **responses to two questions** about the ways the poem builds feeling and emotion **(the HOW)** * **a visual with a brief explanation** of its significance in terms of **capturing the feelings and emotions of the poem.** |

## Section 1. Preparing responses to a selected poem

### Choose a poem

##### Choose a poem which is suitable for close study and that you think you will enjoy exploring

Your teacher will help you to choose a poem written by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander poet for detailed study. Activities in this booklet will provide you with opportunities to develop understanding of Aboriginal peoples’ and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ histories, cultures and languages. This will mean gaining an understanding about their unique sense of identity which is entwined with their interconnectedness with country/place[[1]](#footnote-1).

### Part A: Initial activities to access meaning

#### Active reading — honing in, questioning, exclaiming, predicting

##### Annotating

Complete an ‘active reading’ of your chosen poem, making notes and writing annotations on a copy of the poem.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| On your first reading of the poem, your annotations might be about: | Example annotation |
| * personal questions, admissions of ignorance | *What does this mean?* |
| * statements | *This means/reminds me of … I think …* |
| * exclamations … | *Great line/strong image!* |
| * quick explanations of known aspects | *Vocabulary and poetic techniques* |
| * definitions of known difficult words and phrases | *Def’n: …* |
| * marking (e.g. underlining, circling) unknown words or phrases | *?* |
| * confirmation or denials or predictions | *Ah, that’s what I thought. /I didn’t expect this …* |
| * brief comments about the poem’s meaning | *Could mean …* |

##### Reading the poem aloud

Speaking/reciting your chosen poem and picking up its sounds and rhythms is important in engaging with and understanding the poem. It is important at all stages of this unit and you may have the opportunity to do this in class.

#### Collage

A collage (e.g. digital or manual) involves the selective use of images (pictures, sketches, and drawings), colour, spacing, balance, repetition and texture. It can be very effective in capturing meaning in poems that raise social issues.

##### Making a collage

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Gather materials you could use to construct a collage of your selected poem.  Look for materials that visually represents the poem’s:   * meaning * emotions (e.g. joy/sadness, in/security, dis/satisfaction).   The collage is for eventual sharing with classmates. |
| Image: *birthday*, Sparklefish’s photostream, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0, [www.flickr.com/photos/ 38795936@N00/4600499010/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/38795936@N00/4600499010/) |

You can construct your collage and present it with your poem to classmates later when you have done more research about your chosen poem.

Part B: Ongoing reflective reading activities

#### Researching, confirming, accepting/resisting, elaborating and refining

|  |
| --- |
| **After you have finished recording your Part A responses, your next steps will be to reflect further on your selected poem and elaborate on the comments you have made about it.**  You will need to find and process more information, make new connections, and come up with a more detailed reading. The activities that follow will enable you to respond to the poem in deeper and more informed ways. |

#### Unlocking a poem’s meanings and messages — the WHAT

##### Responding to WHAT questions

It is likely that Aboriginal poets and Torres Strait Islander poets will confront any social issues and challenges their communities face.

The questions below are designed to challenge and extend your thinking about different issues so you will need to join in classroom discussion with your teacher to make sure you understand them.

* 1. Read, discuss, analyse and annotate the first three sample responses to   
     Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s poem, ‘Son of Mine’ — see ‘Appendix 2’.
  2. Select two WHAT questions from the table below that you’d like to use in responding to your chosen poem.
  3. Refer back to your Part A notes and try drafting initial responses to these two WHAT questions.

The WHAT questions

|  |
| --- |
| The WHAT of a poem — questions about a poem’s meaning and messages |
| 1. Identify and evaluate the situation within which the people/characters move. |
| 1. What cultural aspects such as age, gender, and race are depicted in the poem? |
| 1. What people/characters are included/excluded? Why? |
| 1. Whose interests does the poem serve? |
| 1. What particular view of the world is foregrounded in the poem? |
| 1. What beliefs and values are expressed in the poem? |
| 1. What is the poem valuing, and what does it leave a reader thinking and believing? |
| 1. Is there anything in particular that you took from your reading of the poem? |
| 1. Do these messages make up powerful knowledge? |
| 1. Do you think the poem is capable of changing readers’ feelings, attitudes and values? Or might it just reinforce what is already there in people’s minds? |

#### Unlocking ways in which poets build feeling and emotion — the HOW

##### Responding to HOW questions

See ‘Appendix 1’ at the end of this booklet for the sets of HOW questions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Unlocking feeling and emotion in your poem will help you to understand how poets make use of ‘evaluative’ vocabulary. Evaluative vocabulary evaluates people, places and things.**  These words are used to appeal to a reader’s feelings and emotions, judge the way different people behave in the world, express appreciation about the worth and value of things, and to intensify or make meaning stronger or weaker. |

The following activities will help you to understand ‘evaluative vocabulary’ and to write about how it works in your poem. The activities can be done:

* individually
* in pairs
* in small groups
* as part of the whole class.

You can use colour coding, a dictionary and a thesaurus.

#### Activity: AFFECT — finding words of feeling and emotion

It is likely that Aboriginal poets and Torres Strait Islander poets will write respectfully about their affinity with the land, and the profound knowledge of their Elders and ancestors. These, in themselves, are emotional matters.

Keep these things in mind as you read the table below and answer the questions.

Table 1: Affect

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Positive feelings | Negative feelings |
| **HAPPINESS and JOY**  cheerful, jubilant, contented, fulfilled, wellbeing, exhilaration, pleasure, bliss, awe, ecstasy  **LOVE and AFFECTION**  kindness, understanding, empathy, compassion  **ATTRACTION**  desire, yearning, longing, infatuation | **UNHAPPINESS**  sad, despondent, heavy-hearted, dejected, cheerless, gloomy, downcast, depressed, anguished, grief-stricken, distressed, pessimistic, alienated, rejected, isolated, empty |
| **SECURITY**  together, confident, comfortable, trusting, assured | **INSECURITY**  uneasy, anxious, expectant, restless, nervous, stressed, startled, fearful, terrified, horrified, disquieted |
| **SATISFACTION**  satisfied, interested, involved, absorbed, engrossed, pleased, impressed, thrilled | **DISSATISFACTION**  flat, jaded, bored, frustrated, discontented, disillusioned, annoyed, irritated, jealous, angry, disgusted, envious, spiteful, furious, resentful, embittered, vengeful |

Source: Adapted from Martin and White, 2007, p. 51.

* 1. Underline/colour and discuss words in your chosen poem that evoke **positive feelings**. Add these words to those in the brackets below:

happiness (wellbeing, compassion, ……………………………………………………)

security (trust, reassurance, ……………………………………………………………..)

satisfaction (involvement, absorption, ………………………………………………….)

* 1. What effect did these words have on you as you read the poem? Explain.

* 1. Underline/colour and discuss words in your chosen poem that evoke **negative feelings**. Add these words to those in the brackets below:

unhappiness (dejected, anguished, distressed …………………………………………)

insecurity (anxious, fearful, horrified ……………………………………………………..)

dissatisfaction (frustrated, envious, spiteful ……………………………………………..)

* 1. What effect did these words have on you as you read the poem? Explain.

* 1. What **overall feeling** or emotion is evident in the whole poem? How is this likely to **position** a reader’s feelings and response to the poem?

**Joint response — to a poem chosen by your teacher**

* 1. Join with your teacher and classmates in discussing and writing a response to the following question:

**What elements of feeling and emotion used in the poem connect with your emotions as a reader?**

#### Activity: JUDGMENT — finding words of judgment

Readers judge people/characters through their behaviour — what they say and do, and what others say about them. Our personal attitudes and perceptions about cultures will also sway our judgments.

At one level, people’s/characters’ behaviour might be rated as highly socially acceptable and praiseworthy (e.g. normal, capable, dependable) or unacceptable (e.g. eccentric, incapable, unreliable).

At another level it may be assessed in terms of society’s moral codes, rules, regulations or laws, that is, whether or not society would judge it as ethical, honest, proper (moral) or law abiding, as opposed to unethical, dishonest, improper or law breaking.

As is the case with all writers/creators, a poet will seek to position readers into admiring, respecting or disliking people/characters because of the ways they behave.

* 1. With your teacher and classmates, choose a person who is in the media frequently, and evaluate the way their character is represented (positively or negatively) using the Judgment table below.

Table 2: Judgment (ethics)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attitudes towards behaviour | | |
| **POSITIVE NEGATIVE** | | |
| In terms of social admiration, regard, or esteem, is the person’s behaviour or character represented as being: | | |
| * normal?\* * fortunate? | usual, average, everyday, stable, predictable  lucky, privileged, charmed, celebrated | odd, weird, erratic, unpredictable  unfortunate, unlucky, hapless, tragic |
| * capable? | strong, sensible, experienced, clever, accomplished, competent, heroic | incapable, weak, stupid, naïve, ignorant, inept |
| * tenacious? | dependable, reliable, resolute, focused, persevering, constant | unreliable, rash, impetuous, reckless, inconstant, distracted |
| **POSITIVE NEGATIVE** | | |
| In terms of **social sanction** (adherence tosocial moral codes, rules, regulations, laws), is the person’s **behaviour or character** represented as being: | | |
| * honest? | honest, truthful, candid, credible, genuine | dishonest, deceitful, deceptive, devious, scheming, manipulative |
| * proper (above reproach)? | good, moral, just | bad, immoral, unjust, selfish, unfair, insensitive, mean, corrupt, evil |
| * lawful (within the law)? | law abiding | criminal, unlawful |
| \* It is likely that different people will have different perceptions of what is ‘normal’. Not being normal (e.g. eccentric) is not necessarily a negative quality. Positive and negative categories are probably better viewed as being on a continuum. | | |

1. To help your understanding, **read, analyse and annotate** this sample response to the poem, ‘Son of Mine’ — sample response Q17 from ‘Appendix 2’.

|  |
| --- |
| Q17a. Identify the positive or negative judgments the poem makes about the way people/characters behave.  Oodgeroo is very strong on how dreadful racism is. Phrases such as ‘brutal wrong’ conveys how vicious some of the attacks on Aboriginal people must have been and therefore how atrocious the behaviour of the people who committed these. In this case she has added the adjective ‘brutal’ to the noun, which in itself is highly negative.  As well as cruel acts she describes acts which are illegal (‘crimes that shame mankind’, ‘rape and murder’) and which have devastating effects (‘heartbreak’). The dreadful nature of racism and the unreasonable attitude of racist people is also expressed through the metaphor ‘hatred blind’, which suggests that the people who hate either can’t or won’t see how wrong their attitude is.  Q17b. How do these judgments measure up against what you, as a reader, think is right and wrong?  I agree with Oodgeroo. I can’t believe anyone would be so stupid and cruel as to judge someone based on their skin colour. Although it does make me think about other ways in which I’ve hurt people’s feelings for no good reason. (Is there ever a good reason?) |

* 1. To show that you understand what is meant by ‘judgment’:
     1. mark at least two sections in **your poem** that make positive or negative judgments about the behaviour of people in it
     2. complete the boxes below.

Note:You might find either only positive or only negative judgments in the poem. These might be obvious (explicit) or suggested (implied).

**Section one:** Identify words and phrases from this section that contain significant judgment (positive or negative) made about a person/character in your poem.

**Explain the implications of this judgment for the poem’s meaning.**

**Section two:** Identify words and phrases from this section that also contain significant judgment (positive or negative) made about a person/character in your poem.

**Explain the implications of this judgment for the poem’s meaning.**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Read the set of HOW questions in ‘Appendix 1’.Choose a question which focuses on judgment — and use it to **draft a blog response**. |

#### Activity: APPRECIATION (aesthetics) — finding words that capture the worth of ‘things’

Poets directly or indirectly express positive or negative appreciation or valuation of the worth of certain aspects. The following questions will be useful as you discuss and write about your poem.

1. To help your understanding, **with a classmate, read, analyse and annotate** the sample response below to the poem, ‘Son of Mine’ — sample response Q23 from ‘Appendix 2’.

|  |
| --- |
| Q22a. Has the writer effectively used particular words or word groups that capture the positive or negative worth of: people’s appearance, their abilities, their relationships; made objects; places, nature and natural objects? Identify these and explain.  The word group ‘colour line’ refers to a point of separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples based on the colour of their skin. It is an example of a metaphor, as often this line is not as obvious as it was when Aboriginal people were not free to go to certain places (and even then it was not necessarily a ‘line’ you could see). Although Oodgeroo does not state up front (for example, by adding an adjective such as appalling or outrageous) that this is extremely negative, she nevertheless conveys this through the effect on her son who is ‘puzzled and hurt’ by someone who has discriminated against him.  This is made even more obvious by the description of texture and beauty of her child’s skin in the simile ‘Your black skin soft as velvet shine’.  Q22b. How do these compare with your own ideas of worth/beauty?  I absolutely agree with the poet and feel her pain at the way her son has been treated. The way she has captured the softness and gloss of her child’s skin by comparing it to velvet gives me some insight into how precious he is to her and how carefully she must have thought about how she would respond to him. |

1. Poets may make **positive or negative appreciations about the worth or value** of the following. **Find and insert examples from your poem.**

people’s/characters’ appearances ……………………………………………………

people’s/characters’ relationships ………………………………………………………

made objects ……………………………………………………………………………

nature and natural objects ………………………………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
| * 1. **Draft a blog response** explaining the overall effect these appreciations have on the poem’s meaning. |

#### Activity: GRADUATION — finding words that grade meaning upwards or downwards

Poets have ways of scaling the force of meaning upwards or downwards, or sharpening or softening its focus to make a poem have more impact.

The table below summarises ways in which this can happen. Read through it carefully and discuss it with your teacher and classmates.

1. Find words in **your poem** that are intended to **intensify meaning** and insert these, as appropriate, into the **second column** in the table below**.**
2. **Explain their overall effect** in intensifying meaning in the poem.

Examples in the table below include some extracted from the work of Aboriginal poets and/or Torres Strait Islander poets.

Table 3: Graduation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The feeling, emotion and meaning of the text is graded:**   * **upwards or downwards (force)** * **sharpened or softened (focus)** | **Examples from your poem …** |
| **Force:** the degree of intensity of a word or expression   * **Graders** such as *quite*, *very*, *really*, *extremely*, intensify meaning, while others tone it down, e.g. *fairly*, *somewhat*, *slightly*. These combine with other words. |  |
| **Focus:** membership of a class of things   * **Sharper focus** (strengthens membership of that class), e.g. *true* friend; *pure* evil; a *real* man * **Softer/blurred focus** (weakens membership of that class), e.g. *kind of* stupid; *sort of* scary |  |
| **Quantifiers express**   * **number:** few, some, many; ‘Let no-one say the past is dead’; ‘Every place a killing place’ * **amount/size:** miniscule, tiny, huge, gigantic * **extent:** short, wide-spread, long-lasting |  |
| **Maximisers express the highest possible intensity**  e.g. *utterly/totally/thoroughly/absolutely/completely* miserable; *perfectly* happy |  |
| * **Words may be infused with varying degrees of intensity**, e.g. like, love, adore; happy, joyous, ecstatic; trickled, flowed, poured, flooded * These include **words of modality** indicating: probability (*certainly, possibly*); obligation (*must, could*); frequency (*always, seldom*); inclination (*willingly*) * **Words may be infused with intense feeling or attitude:** ‘Brutal wrong’; ‘deeds malign’ |  |
| **Poetic or figurative language:** words used in a non-literal way evoke and strengthen emotion, e.g.   * **metaphor:** ‘colour line’; ‘When lives of black and white entwine’ * **simile:** ‘soft as velvet shine’; ‘The white system of life, it cuts like a knife’ * **personification:** ‘Ghost-gums dimly stand at the edge of light / Watching corroboree’ |  |
| **Repetition and synonymy** scale intensity up, e.g.   * ‘I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind, / I could tell of crimes that shame mankind’ * The floods were *terrible, just awful*. |  |
| **Humour:** rhetorical devices reveal the dark or serious side of a topic in ways that cause laughter or amusement   * **irony** — making a statement but implying the opposite * **hyperbole** — exaggerating or overstating something (cried *a million tears*) * **parody** — imitating or sending up something (‘You call it vandalism / I call itpayback*’*) |  |
| **Allusion:** brief, usually indirect reference to a person, place, or event — real or fictional. Depending on their content, often:   * **historical:** ‘My father was Noonuccal man and kept old tribal way’ * **cultural:** ‘old Mr Uluru / a proud man’; ‘You are my Mother, my Mother the Land / Your bloodline aches today’; (including biblical) ‘this son him name Moses’ * **mythological:** ‘they’re here now / the Guardians / sitting on a rock’ * **political:** ‘Interventionists are coming interventionists are coming’ * **literary:** ‘With words you’d never see in print, except in D.H. Lawrence’ |  |

Source: Adapted from Martin and White, 2007, pp.135–147.

#### Activity: CLOZE — understanding the use of evaluative language

|  |
| --- |
| A ‘cloze’ is an activity consisting of the whole or a portion of a text (in this case your poem) with selected words removed and the spaces left blank. If your poem is a long one, you might use part of it (3–4 stanzas, perhaps, depending on its size).  **A cloze requires the ability to understand how words make meaning both in the context of the poem and the context in which it was created.** |

1. Select and take out about 7–10 single words that are especially important in your poem.

For example, you might choose from:

* words essential to meaning
* words that signal a change in message
* words that carry strong emotion
* words that show appreciation of worth or value
* words that increase intensity
* figurative language, e.g. part of a simile.

You might also have a go at identifying the different word classes to which your words belong, e.g. nouns, adjectives.

1. Try your cloze out on a classmate who has not seen your poem. Ask your classmate to fill in the blank spaces.
2. Discuss why your classmate chose particular words to insert.   
     
   Note: The idea is not necessarily to choose the ‘right’ words, but words that might fit, then to discuss why those choices were made.

## Section 2. Creating blog entries

1. Revisit your draft responses, shape these into blog entries in response to specific questions and follow your teacher’s instructions to upload them.
2. Print out your blog entries and be prepared to discuss them in class. Your class blog will be the host for a community of like-minded writers learning about Aboriginal poets and Torres Strait Islander poets and sharing ideas, opinions and information. Discussion points might include:

* ways to respectfully disagree
* whether important ideas are being captured, e.g. whether poems can change people’s opinions on issues through a wide range of poetic techniques, especially figurative language
* the personal, less formal language of the blog, e.g. use of first person.

1. A blog at its best is interactive. As well as uploading your own work, respond to the work of one other student per session. Your feedback should be positive, helpful and specific.

## Section 3. Editing and proofreading blog entries

At this stage you will have completed many blog entries in which you responded to questions, chose visuals expressing your feelings about aspects of the poem, and commented on the work of other students.

1. Now you need to **choose two of your blog entries which you believe best represent the depth of your learning** (about poetry, Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander culture, evaluative language, communicating with peers, the visual and written conventions of blogging) and which you wish to have considered for assessment.

The two entries you choose should each be between 300–400 words in length, and when combined, should comprise:

##### The WHAT

* **written responses to two questions** about the poem’s meaning and messages (the WHAT)
* **a visual with a brief explanation** of its significance in terms of capturing an aspect of what the poem means to you, e.g. a drawing, a collage, a photograph, etc.

##### The HOW

* **written responses to two questions** about the ways the poem builds feeling and emotion (the HOW) — one question from *Judgment* and one question from *Appreciation*
* **a** **visual with a brief explanation** of its significance in terms of capturing the feelings and emotions of the poem, e.g. a drawing, a collage, a photograph, etc.

See ‘Appendix 1’ for sets of WHAT and HOW questions.

1. Re-read the sample responses to see what is expected (‘Appendix 2: Sample blog entries’), and take time to edit, proofread and expand (where required) the entries you have chosen.
2. Complete the table below by outlining:

* reasons for your choice of the responses you intend to submit for assessment
* what you’ve decided to work on to improve these responses.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title of poem** |  |
| **Name of poet** |  |
| ***Two* reasons for choosing these entries to work on** |  |
| ***Two* aspects I need to work on, e.g.**   * **answering the questions more clearly** * **language use** * **more detailed explanations** * **more examples to support points** |  |

1. Exchange edited sections with a classmate for peer feedback.
2. Upload these responses as your final blog entry for assessment and submit print copies to your teacher.

### Appendix 1: Powerful questions for unlocking the WHAT and the HOW of a poem

The following questions have proven effective in analysing and responding to poems, helping to unlock:

* the WHAT(a poem’s meaning)
* the HOW (the emotional and persuasive effects of the evaluative language the poet has used)

Select appropriate questions from the categories below to use in reading and writing about your chosen poem. Remember to use examples (including short quotations from the poem where appropriate) to support your opinions.

|  |
| --- |
| **The WHAT of a poem — questions about a poem’s meaning and messages** |
| 1. Identify and evaluate the situation within which people/characters move. |
| 1. What cultural aspects such as age, gender, and race are depicted in the poem? |
| 1. What people/characters are included/excluded? Why? |
| 1. Whose interests does the poem serve? |
| 1. What particular view of the world is foregrounded in the poem? |
| 1. What beliefs and values are expressed in the poem? |
| 1. What is the poem valuing, and what does it leave a reader thinking and believing? |
| 1. Is there anything in particular that you took from your reading of the poem? |
| 1. Do these messages make up powerful knowledge? |
| 1. Do you think the poem is capable of changing readers’ feelings, attitudes and values? Or might it just reinforce what is already there in people’s minds? |

|  |
| --- |
| **The HOW of a poem — questions about the ways a poem builds feeling and emotion**  **These questions are designed to help you understand the use of evaluative language.** |
| **AFFECT (feeling, emotion)** |
| 1. What elements of feeling and emotion that have been selected and strategically used in the poem connect with your emotions as a reader? Consider the following:  * What words in the poem evoke positive feelings of: happiness (e.g. surprise, excitement, wellbeing); security (e.g. trust, reassurance); satisfaction (e.g. pleasure, interest, absorption)? What effects are these likely to have on the way a reader feels? * What words in the poem evoke negative feelings? What effects are these likely to have on the way a reader feels? |
| 1. How might the language of the poem make a reader feel — amazed, confused, unsure, nervous, guilty, interested, angry, sad, happy, reassured …? |
| 1. What emotions (e.g. intrigue, awe, sympathy, anger, happiness) in the poem might play a part in positioning a reader’s feelings? |
| 1. What shifts in emotions (e.g. happiness to sadness, security to insecurity, satisfaction to dissatisfaction) occur throughout the poem? Explain. |
| 1. Can you find words in some parts of the poem that have more intensity of feeling than in other parts? Explain. |
| **Judgment of people’s character (usually through their actions)** |
| 1. Do you agree that the evaluative language used by writers can have either negative or positive connotations and that it can potentially help or hurt people? |
| 1. a. Identify any positive or negative judgments the poem makes about the way people behave.  b. How do these judgments measure up against what you, as a reader, think is right and wrong? |
| 1. Do you think writers expect readers to evaluate whether people’s/characters’ actions are good or bad? Explain. |
| 1. Judging by what people do and say in the poem, which of the following words might be used to describe them: talented, capable, confident, competent, honest, moral, law-abiding, genuine … ? What other words might be appropriate? |
| 1. Ideally how might the writer want readers to judge people’s behaviour in the poem? |
| 1. As reader of a poem, you may be invited to a position of empathy — of emotional solidarity — with people/characters or, at least, an understanding of their motives. Were you easily able to accept the poem’s invitation to adopt a position of empathy? Why?/Why not? |
| **Appreciation of worth and beauty** |
| 1. a. Has the writer effectively used particular words or word groups that capture the positive or negative worth of ‘things’, such as people’s appearance, their abilities, their relationships; made objects, places, nature and natural objects? b. Underline these words or word groups and explain. How do they compare with your own ideas of worth/beauty? |
| 1. Can you find really good examples of words/word groups (e.g. adjectives, similes, metaphors, personification) that create strong images in your mind? |

### Appendix 2: Sample blog entries

Below are some sample blog entries to Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s poem ‘Son of Mine’ where some of the key content of the task has been identified. This will give you a good idea of the kind of subject matter you will need to include, and the structures and language features that are appropriate for blog entries.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Blog entry 1 — 15 July | |
| Response to WHATquestions | |
| 1. Identify and evaluate the situation within which people/characters move. 2. What cultural aspects such as age, gender, and race are depicted in the poem?   ‘Son of Mine’ is about an Aboriginal mother, the poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal, who is in a very challenging situation for a parent. Her son Denis has been upset by racial discrimination — it sounds as if someone has called him names because his skin is black as it says he is ‘puzzled and hurt by colour line’. These feelings, combined with the fact that his eyes are searching his mother’s for answers as if he has never confronted the situation before, make him sound like a young boy, although we are not told his age. His mother has to think about how she will respond to this and what she will tell him: ‘What can I tell you, son of mine?’ | |
| Response to HOWquestions | |
| Judgment of people’s character  17 a. Identify the positive or negative judgments the text makes about the way people behave.  Oodgeroo is very strong on how dreadful racism is. Phrases such as ‘brutal wrong’ conveys how vicious some of the attacks on Aboriginal people must have been and therefore how atrocious the behaviour of the people who committed were. In this case she has added the adjective ‘brutal’ to the noun, which in itself is highly negative.  As well as cruel acts she describes acts which are illegal (‘crimes that shame mankind’, ‘rape and murder’) and which have devastating effects (‘heartbreak’). The dreadful nature of racism and the unreasonable attitude of racist people is also expressed through the metaphor ‘hatred blind’, which suggests that the people who hate either can’t or won’t see how wrong their attitude is.  b.How do these judgments measure up against what you, as reader, think is right and wrong?  I agree with Oodgeroo. I can’t believe anyone would be so stupid and cruel as to judge someone based on their skin colour. Although it does make me think about other ways in which I’ve hurt people’s feelings for no good reason. (Is there ever a good reason?) | |
| Image: Reaching hands | |
| I chose this image to represent the theme of the poem, the importance of harmony I think Oodgeroo wanted for her son and all people. I imagine the hands are reaching out together for a future ‘When lives of black and white entwine / And men in brotherhood combine’. |  |
| Image: *Ugo and Sarah*, pinkmoose’s photostream, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0, [www.flickr.com/photos/pinkmoose/205225521/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pinkmoose/205225521/) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Blog entry 2 — 15 July | |
| Response to WHAT questions | |
| 1. What people/characters are **included**/excluded? Why?   The only people in the poem whose names we know are Oodgeroo and Denis, but there are others who are outside the poem whose names we do not know but who are there. These are the people in the second and third stanzas who have acted towards people of another race, either badly or well. While Oodgeroo only talks about behaviour, of course it is people who behave, and others who are affected by this behaviour.  Oodgeroo first considers telling her son about deeds (and consequently those who performed them) which are based on ‘hatred’, and the ‘heartbreak’ it has caused Aboriginal people. These people are in fact criminals, as she says acts such as ‘rape and murder’ have been committed which go beyond cruelty and are actual crimes.  In the third stanza she decides to tell him instead about people whose behaviour has been admirable (‘brave and fine’). These people have contributed to a state of harmony between the different groups to the point where they can live together, where ‘lives of black and white entwine / And men in brotherhood combine’. | |
| Response to HOW questions | |
| **Appreciation of worth and beauty**   1. a.Has the writer effectively used particular words or word groups that capture the positive or negative worth: people’s appearance, their abilities, their relationships; human objects, places, nature and natural objects? Identify these and explain.   The word group ‘colour line’ refers to a point of separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples based on the colour of their skin. It is an example of a metaphor, as often this line is not as obvious as it was when Aboriginal people were not free to go to certain places (and even then it was not necessarily a ‘line’ you could see). Although Oodgeroo does not state up front (for example, by adding an adjective such as appalling or outrageous) that this is extremely negative, she nevertheless conveys this through the effect on her son who is ‘puzzled and hurt’ by someone who has discriminated against him.  This is made even more obvious by the description of texture and beauty of her child’s skin in the simile ‘Your black skin soft as velvet shine’.   1. b.How do these compare with your own ideas of worth/beauty?   I absolutely agree with the poet and feel her pain at the way her son has been treated. The way she has captured the softness and gloss of her child’s skin by comparing it to velvet gives me some insight into how precious he is to her and how carefully she must have thought about how she would respond to him. | |
| Image: Still passionate | |
| Oodgeroo would have been much older in this photo than she would have been when she wrote this poem, but she still looks strong. She looks as if she’s trying to convince her listener of her point of view, as she does very well in ‘Son of Mine’. In this photograph, as well as words, she is using her whole body to communicate with the person sitting opposite her. |  |
| Oodgeroo, 1982 National Land Rights Action Brisbane portrait by Juno Gemes © Juno Gemes/Licensed by Viscopy, 2014. |

1. Aboriginal peoples refer to ‘Country’ while Torres Strait Islander peoples refer to ‘Place’ — the significant place they have a symbiotic connection to and relationship with, including the people, flora, fauna, sky, spirituality (ancestors) and weather cycles. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)