YEAR 9

REMOTE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

POWER AND CONFLICT POETRY

PRE READING ACTIVITIES

**Name:**

**Class:**

**Teacher:**



*This booklet has been designed to help you learn the poems in the AQA Power and Conflict cluster from your poetry anthology at home. Work your way through the activities in the booklet. You can fill these out on the computer or print the booklet off and hand write your answers. On various pages there will be directions to other resources you can find online to help you with your studies. If you do not have access to a computer, please do not worry! The most important things you need to know have been set out for you here.*

‘STORM ON THE ISLAND’

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| **Session 1: Storm on the Island** |

*This first session will be based around ‘Storm on the Island’ by Seamus Heaney. Some of the activities will require you to make notes in this booklet or on a different piece of paper. When you begin to annotate the poem, you can do this in your copies of the poetry anthology if you wish. We will go through these poems again in class when you return to address any misconceptions you might have made. If you have any questions, email your teacher who will get back to you as soon as they can.*

*Spend no more than five minutes on this activity. Consider the title of the poem. Predict what big ideas the poem will explore by completing the following activities. Write your answers as annotations around the title:*

1. Highlight two key words in the title and explore their connotations. What do they make you think of? Try and consider at least three ideas for each.
2. Explain why you think the title says ‘the island’ instead of ‘an island’.
3. Now summarise your predictions and notes into THREE words. These words should be the big ideas you think Heaney will discuss in his poem.

MAKE PREDICTIONS

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| Activity #1 – Pre-reading activities |



**Storm on the Island**



Ireland's most celebrated living poet, Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past".

Seamus Heaney was born in County Derry, Northern Ireland in 1939. At the age of 12, he won a scholarship to a Catholic boarding school, and it was there he received news of the death of his young brother - an incident remembered in his poems The Blackbird of Glanmore and Mid-Term Break: 'A four foot box, a foot for every year.' Heaney went on to study English at Queen's University Belfast before training as a teacher.

Heaney's first book, Death of a Naturalist (1966), contained rich depictions of his rural upbringing but by the 1970s, as Ireland's troubles increased, his work took a more political turn. Heaney's poems are often triggered by small, intimate memories. The Shipping Forecast, also known as Glanmore Sonnet VII, typifies his love of place names, and joy of the sound of words. Fascinated by folklore, he also published an award-winning translation of Beowulf.

Heaney has held Professorships at Harvard, and was Oxford Professor of Poetry. Despite having a foot both sides of the border, Heaney has resolutely identified himself as Irish, famously protesting against his inclusion in the Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry with the lines, 'Be advised, my passport's green/ No glass of ours was ever raised/ To toast the Queen.'

SUMMARISE THE INFORMATION

*Spend no more than five minutes on this activity. ‘Storm on the Island’ is by Seamus Heaney. Read the contextual information below. Reduce the information into four bullet points to help you understand what influenced Heaney’s writing. If you are stuck with what you should be summarising, think of it as one bullet point summary per paragraph.*

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| Activity #2 – Read the poem |

*Spend no longer than ten minutes on this activity. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow in full sentences. If you need help understanding the poem, try the Shmoop link. Do your best to answer the questions without extra help first before you look elsewhere for information:* <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/poetry/storm-on-the-island>



1

**Storm on the Island** We are prepared: we build our houses squat, Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate. The wizened earth had never troubled us With hay, so as you can see, there are no stacks Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees Which might prove company when it blows full Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches Can raise a chorus in a gale So that you can listen to the thing you fear Forgetting that it pummels your house too. But there are no trees, no natural shelter. You might think that the sea is company, Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits The very windows, spits like a tame cat Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo. We are bombarded by the empty air. Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

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1. **What is happening in this poem? Explain your ideas in no more than four sentences.**
2. **What kind of storm is Seamus Heaney describing? Try and use a short quotation in your answer.**
3. **How would you describe the speaker’s tone of voice in the poem? Do they feel calm, uncertain, angry, fearful or perhaps something else? Does the tone change as the poem progresses? Explain your ideas.**

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| Activity #3 – Clarifying tricky vocabulary |



*Spend no longer than twenty minutes on this activity. Some of the words from the poem are quite complex. Write the definitions for each word and explain what they mean in the poem’s context. Look at the example below to help you. Once you have finished adding your definitions, check the answers in the back of the booklet immediately to avoid any errors and misconceptions. There will be a chance for you to visually represent each word at the end of this activity as well.*

CLARIFY TRICKY VOCABULARY

**An example:**

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| **Word** | **Add the definition** | **Read the word in context** | **What does the line mean?** |
| **squat** | *Short and Wide* | ‘We are prepared: we build our houses **squat**’ | *The poet is saying the residents of the island have built their houses short so they are not damaged by the weather like they would be if they were tall.*  |
| **wizened** |  | ‘The **wizened** earth had never troubled us.’ |  |
| **stooks** |  | ‘there are no stacks or **stooks** that can be lost.’ |  |
| **pummels** |  | ‘you listen to the thing you fear forgetting that it **pummels** your house too.’ |  |
| **strafes** |  | ‘We just sit tight while wind dives and **strafes** invisibly.’ |  |
| **salvo** |  | ‘Space is a **salvo**, we are bombarded with the empty air.’ |  |
| ***Extension:*** *Create an icon (visual representation) of each word in the space below to help your understanding of the language used in the poem.* |
| Activity #4 – Find it, Highlight it, Annotate it |

*Spend no longer than thirty minutes on this activity. You may complete this activity by annotating the copy of the poem in this booklet OR in your poetry anthology if you have it with you. If you run out of space, feel free to print another copy of the poem off OR write on a different piece of paper. We will go through this again in class so please do not worry about missing anything. Complete the ‘find it, highlight it, annotate it’ task by looking at the line number each question directs you to, highlighting what is needed and answering the questions as annotations on your poem. If you miss any questions out, that’s fine BUT underline, circle or highlight ones you need to come back to later.*

1. **Line 1 –** Highlight the pronouns ‘we’ – Why does Heaney use these pronouns? What impression does it create of those who live on the island?
2. **Line 1 –** Circle the caesura – What does the pause reveal about how the speaker is really feeling?
3. **Line 1 and 2** – Underline the words ‘prepared’, ‘squat’ and ‘good slate’ – Explain how these words create a sense of security.
4. **Line 3** – Highlight the adjective ‘wizened’ – What impression are we given of the island from this adjective?
5. **Lines 1-5** – No need to highlight anything here – Write a brief comment about the tone and atmosphere of these first five lines.
6. **Line 6** – Highlight the noun ‘company’ – This noun is used twice in the poem. Why might someone want company in a dangerous situation?
7. **Line 7** – Highlight the word ‘blast’ – What is the effect of placing this word on a different line instead of putting it in the line above?
8. **Line 7 –** Circle the caesura used in this line – Why does the writer want the reader to pause after this word specifically?
9. **Line 7** – Highlight the direct address used in this line – Who do you think the speaker is talking to in this poem?
10. **Line 8 –** Highlight ‘a tragic chorus in a gale’ – Which language device is being used here, what aspect of the storm is the line describing and why describe it as tragic?

**11. Line 9 –** Highlight both uses of direct address – Why does the writer repeat this use of direct address?

**12. Line 9 –** No need to highlight anything here – What *is* the thing that people fear?

**13. Line 10 –** Highlight the word ‘pummels’ – What impression does it give readers of how the storm has hit?

**14. Lines 6-10 –** No need to highlight anything – Explain how the tone and atmosphere is beginning to change from the first five lines.

**15. Lines 11 –** Highlight the repetition of ‘no’ – Explain how Heaney is creating a sense of helplessness.

**16. Lines 13 –** Highlight ‘exploding comfortably’ – What language device is this? (Where two opposing words are placed directly next to each other) What impression does it give of the sea?

**17. Lines 14-16** – Highlight every time there is an ‘s’ in these lines – Repeated ‘s’ sounds are called sibilance. Consider what kind of sounds are created when the writer repeats the letter ‘s’ and why the writer would want to create this sound in these lines specifically. (Try saying the words out loud)

**18. Line 15 –** Highlight the simile in this line – Why does Heaney compare the storm to ‘a tame cat turned savage’?

1**9. Line 16 –** Circle the word ‘savage’ – What are the connotations of the word savage? What does it make you think of?

**20. Lines 17-18 –** Highlight the words ‘salvo’ and ‘bombarded’ – These are military terms. Why do you think Heaney has used them to describe a storm?

**21. Line 18** – Nothing to highlight here – What image does ‘bombarded’ create of the power of the storm?

**22. Line 19** – Highlight ‘huge nothing’ – Why are the people on the island powerless against the storm?

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| Activity #5 – Further Contextual Information |

*Spend no longer than fifteen minutes on this section. Having read the poem, we have established that it is about an island which is severely affected by a storm which hits its shores. However, the poem also contains a deeper meaning about a period of time which severely affected Seamus Heaney’s home country of Ireland. Read the information below and complete the guided reading activities as you go.*

**Highlight TWO points maximum in each paragraph that help you understand the poem’s context.**

**Paragraph Titles**

**Bullet Point Paragraph Summary**

The poem was first published in the collection *Death of a Naturalist* in 1966.

The title *Storm on the Island* is blunt and explicit. Despite the lack of a named location, the ‘Storm’ in the title is code for Stormont, the Northern Island seat of Government, a bit like the House of Parliament are the seat of the UK Government. (Note the first few words of the title spell ‘Stormont’). Moreover, Island is a [homophone] of Ireland which further conveys the poem is about Ireland. Therefore, this is a poem about a metaphorical storm, that of the Northern Ireland [Troubles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troubles). Heaney rarely wrote directly about the conflict, and this poem’s obliqueness is characteristic.

This doesn’t prevent the poem from being read literally. It still works as a description of fierce weather or a description of any conflict in any place. Although the poet refers to ‘we’ throughout, there is a subtle hint of loneliness; of man pitted against the elements, and man pitted against political strife.

The Troubles, also called the ‘Northern Ireland conflict’, was a violent conflict from about 1968 to 1998 in [Northern Ireland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Northern-Ireland) between the overwhelmingly [Protestant](https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Protestant-Heritage-1354359) unionists (loyalists), who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the [United Kingdom](https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom), and the overwhelmingly [Roman Catholic](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Roman-Catholicism) nationalists (republicans), who wanted the area to become part of the [Republic of Ireland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Ireland). The other major players in the conflict were the [British army](https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-Army), [Royal Ulster Constabulary](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Royal-Ulster-Constabulary) (RUC), and the [Ulster Defence Regiment](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ulster-Defence-Regiment) (UDR; from 1992 called the [Royal Irish Regiment](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Royal-Irish-Regiment)). They believed their purpose was to play a peacekeeping role, most prominently between the nationalist [Irish Republican Army](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Irish-Republican-Army) (IRA), which viewed the conflict as a small war for national independence, and the unionist paramilitary forces, which labelled the IRA’s aggression as terrorism.

Marked by street fighting, sensational bombings, sniper attacks, roadblocks, and imprisonment without trial, the confrontation had the characteristics of a civil war. Some 3,600 people were killed and more than 30,000 more were wounded before a peaceful solution, which involved the governments of both the United Kingdom and Ireland, was effectively reached in 1998, leading to a power-sharing arrangement in the Northern Ireland Assembly at [Stormont](https://www.britannica.com/place/Stormont).

-Stormont is the place where the Irish Government meets.

- The poem is a metaphor for the Troubles in Ireland.

Stormont

Read the poem again, knowing what you now know about the Troubles. Explain in full sentences how ‘Storm on the Island’ could be read as an account of conflict and fighting:

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| Activity #6 – YouTube Analysis |

*This activity is optional but if you are aiming for a grade 6 or above, you should complete it if you have access to the internet. Follow this link:* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6Dq9CxYUlo*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6Dq9CxYUlo) *It will take you to a video by ‘Mr. Salles Teaches English’ on YouTube. The ideas he discusses are complex but will help you consider the ideas needed for grades 7-9. Make notes in the grid below on each section of the video. Completing this activity will take you over your 90 minute slot BUT to achieve those higher grades, you MUST push yourself!*



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| **Tone** | **Warfare** |
| **Nature** | **Form and Structure** |

*Summarise your notes from the video into four key points:*

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

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| Activity #7 – Themes  |

*Spend no longer than ten minutes on this section.*

**Themes:**

Consider the ‘big ideas’ explored in Seamus Heaney’s ‘Storm on the Island’. Tick the ones you think apply to the poem and briefly explain your choices below.

**Individual Experience**

**Identity**

**Negative Emotions - Pride**

**Negative Emotions - Fear**

**Negative Emotions - Guilt**

**Negative Emotions - Anger**

**Power of Humans**

**Power of Nature**

**Effects of Conflict**

**Reality of Conflict**

**Loss and Absence**

**Memory**

Briefly explain your choices in full sentences:

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| Answers |

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| Vocabulary |



*Mark your answers to the vocabulary activity. Your definition does not need to be worded exactly as it is here but you should be able to tell whether you have the correct answer or not.*

CLARIFY TRICKY VOCABULARY

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| **Word** | **Add the definition** | **Read the word in context** | **What does the line mean?** |
| **wizened** | Shrivelled, wrinkled, or dried up, especially with age. | ‘The **wizened** earth had never troubled us.’ | Nothing has ever been able to grow in the earth so the people on the island have not lost anything growing there. |
| **stooks** | Collections of grain stood up on end in a field. | ‘there are no stacks or **stooks** that can be lost.’ | Because nothing grows there, no crops are lost from the awful weather that has hit the island. |
| **pummels** | To hit repeatedly, usually with fists. | ‘you listen to the thing you fear forgetting that it **pummels** your house too.’ | The storm is so fierce that it feels like it is repeatedly hitting the houses on the island. It does not stop but keeps on going. |
| **strafes** | To attack repeatedly with machine guns from the air. | ‘We just sit tight while wind dives and **strafes** invisibly.’ | The wind is so strong that it is constantly attacking anyone who goes outside. There is no end to the wind that hits the island. |
| **salvo** | A discharge of fire from weapons firing together. | ‘Space is a **salvo**, we are bombarded with the empty air.’ | Empty spaces that are not surrounded by objects that can block the wind (like trees or buildings) feel like they are constantly being hit by weapons. |

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| Themes  |

*These are the THREE main themes that ‘Storm on the Island’ relates to. If you ticked something else, ensure you correct it in your booklet and amend your written answer too.*



**Individual Experience**

**Identity**

**Negative Emotions - Pride**

**Negative Emotions - Fear**

**Negative Emotions - Guilt**

**Negative Emotions - Anger**

**Power of Humans**



**Power of Nature**



**Effects of Conflict**

**Reality of Conflict**

**Loss and Absence**

**Memory**