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How to use this book

These beautiful poems can be read aloud in any order, and can be returned to often to be enjoyed for years to come.

The poems and questions grow steadily harder throughout this book. Therefore, students are advised to do the worksheets in order, and to make sure they understand any mistakes before moving on to the next pages.



The Drum

By John Scott

I hate that drum's discordant¹ sound,

1 **discordant** tuneless

Parading round, and round, and round:

To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields²,

2 **yields** brings

And lures³ from cities and from fields,

3 **lures** tempts

To sell their liberty for charms

Of tawdry⁴ lace and glitt'ring arms⁵;

4 **tawdry** cheap but poor quality

And when Ambition's voice commands,

5 **arms** weapons

To fight and fall in foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound,

Parading round, and round, and round:

To me it talks of ravaged⁶ plains,

6 **ravaged** badly damaged

And burning towns and ruin'd swains⁷,

7 **swains** young country men

And mangled⁸ limbs, and dying groans,

8 **mangled** broken and bent

And widows'⁹ tears, and orphans' moans,

9 **widows** women whose husbands have died

And all that Misery's hand bestows¹⁰,

10 **bestows** gives

To fill a catalogue¹¹ of woes¹².

11 **catalogue** long list

12 **woes** problems; sadness

Understanding Content

- 1 Which words suggest to us that this poem is set during a war? Circle all correct answers.
 - a Arms
 - b Parading
 - c Fight
 - d Fields

- 2 What does the drum do?
 - a Tempts young people to join the war
 - b Gives people something to dance to
 - c Tells young people of the dangers of war
 - d Tells people about the excitement of the war

- 3 Which word from the poem means the same as freedom?
 - a Yields
 - b Liberty
 - c Foreign
 - d Catalogue

- 4 What do the young people trade their freedom for? Circle all correct answers.
 - a Ambition
 - b Lace
 - c A drum
 - d Guns

- 5 What does the poet think of when they hear the drum?
 - a The promise of a gun
 - b The negative consequences of war
 - c The excitement of war
 - d Nothing

- 6 What does the rhythm of the poem reflect?
 - a The beat of the drum
 - b The voices of the young soldiers
 - c The burning of the towns
 - d The dying groans of the soldiers

7 Military drums were a lively and exciting way to encourage young men to leave their homes and join the army. However, the poet clearly does not think of the drums or of war in a positive way. Complete this list of negative words from the poem:

Hate

Discordant

Thoughtless

8 Summarise the ideas from the poem about how the young people and their families are affected by war.

- 9 Imagine that the poet's best friend has just come to him and said, 'I want to join the army.' Write what the poet would say in response.

Structure

After studying *Binsey Poplars*, you should now have an idea of how to write about structure. Let's take that further with this poem, which has a very different structure.

If you've ever studied any Shakespeare, you might have heard of an iamb. If not, don't worry. It's a very simple idea. It's a pair of syllables in which the first one is unstressed and the second is stressed. They have the pattern da-DUM. The stressed syllables are underlined for you in the first two lines here:

I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round:

- 1 Can you underline the stressed syllables in the next two lines yourself?

To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,
And lures from cities and from fields,

- 2 You can split this poem into iambs very easily because the poem has such a regular rhythm. What things does this poem's rhythm make you think of? (Try to think of a few things which are connected to the poem's subject.)

3 To have such a regular rhythm, this poem needs to have a very regular number of syllables. For most lines, there are 8 syllables per line. However, in each stanza, there are two different lines. Where do these lines come in the poem?

4 Changing the number of syllables for some lines can have several effects in a poem. Look at the ideas below and circle the ones which you think can be applied to **this** poem.

- a It makes the poem slow down and feel more relaxed.
- b It makes the reader have to work harder to read the poem.
- c It makes the reader focus more on the content of the lines.
- d It causes the reader to stumble and struggle with the lines.

5 Think about the content of those longer lines, and how that connects to the feeling created by the longer lines. Suggest why **THESE** lines in particular are the ones that the poet has lengthened.

6 Repetition is also a key part of the structure in this poem. There are many things which are repeated in it. Which ones can you find? Give examples.

i) Repeated words

ii) Repeated lines

iii) Repeated sentence or stanza structure

7 What effect do you think this repetition is meant to have on the reader? How does it make the reader feel to have so many things which are repeated in this poem?

Sample

