



VINTAGE

ADVANCED HOMEWORK FOR GROWN-UPS

E. FOLEY & B. COATS

 CONTENTS 

Cover

About the Book

Title Page

ASSEMBLY

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

MATHEMATICS

GEOGRAPHY

HISTORY AND POLITICS

ECONOMICS

ART AND DESIGN

BREAK TIME

SCIENCE

CLASSICS

DRAMA AND FILM STUDIES

MUSIC

MODERN LANGUAGES

HOME ECONOMICS

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

ANSWERS

Acknowledgements

Copyright

About the Book

If you paid attention to *Homework for Grown-ups* you should hopefully now have a grasp of the basics: know your chiasmus from your zeugma, your obliques from your acutes, and your Anne of Cleves from your Anne Boleyn. Now, sit up straight, and get your jotters and pencils out, because E. Foley and B. Coates are back to steer you through some of the more complicated elements of the curriculum and beyond.

Advanced Homework for Grown-ups will revisit and refresh the core subjects of Maths, English, Science, Geography, History and Classics in a little more depth. This time, amongst other topics, they tackle logarithms, unlock the secrets of semantics, and explore the Agrarian Revolution, with a mix of really useful information and entertainingly esoteric material.

In addition, new subjects enter the timetable: Music, Modern Languages, Economics, Politics, Philosophy and Psychology, as well as Design and Drama.

Packed with fun practical exercises and, of course, examination papers for the competitive, *Advanced Homework for Grown-ups* will be the perfect gift.

∞ ADVANCED ∞
HOMEWORK
FOR
GROWN-UPS

*Old School Lessons
for Clever Clogs*

E. FOLEY & B. COATES

☐ SQUARE PEG

ASSEMBLY

You may think you're pretty well up on your education: you know your oblique angles from your acutes, your Catherine of Aragon from your Anne of Cleves and your chiasmus from your zeugma. Now it's time to test yourselves a little further. Let's face it, the kids are getting brighter every day. It's no longer just enough to understand the laws of thermodynamics or the reasons for the rise of the Nazis, these days you're just as likely to have your little darling quiz you on the nature of Brecht's theory of *Verfremdungseffekt* or ask you to help them with their simultaneous equations. Fear not, *Advanced Homework for Grown-ups* is here to steer you through some of the more complicated elements of the curriculum and beyond.

Within these pages you will revisit the core subjects of Maths, English, Science, History, Geography, Art, Home Economics and Classics, but in much more depth. This time you will study those mysterious creatures called surds, unlock the secrets of semantics, launch yourself into the wonders of space travel, decipher the mysteries of Malthus, get to grips with sculpture, construct a beautiful Bakewell tart and learn how to curse like a true Roman. We aim to fill your eager brains to the brim with really useful information and also some excitingly esoteric material with which to impress friends, relatives and colleagues.

In addition, you will find chapters on Music, Modern Languages, Economics, Philosophy and Psychology, and Drama and Film Studies. Ever wondered what a theremin is? Always longed to be able to introduce yourself in twenty

different languages? Want to equip yourself to converse on the topics of *Noh* Theatre and *commedia dell'arte*? Keen to know Nietzsche? Or familiarise yourself with Freud? *Advanced Homework for Grown-ups* will take you by the hand and lead you to the fountain of knowledge.

∞ ENGLISH ∞
LANGUAGE
AND
LITERATURE

The wonderful (and potentially worrisome) thing about our rich and varied tongue and its literature is their vast scope. OK, so you've mastered pronouns and relative clauses, the works of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, but who among us has not been caught short by those tricky dinner-party conversations that seem designed to highlight our own philistinism? Well, never fear. This chapter allows us to take you further into the mysteries of grammar, to ponder the peculiar-sounding pursuits of morphology, syntax and pragmatics. We'll show you how to decipher phonetics, and unlock a world in which a word like 'ghoti' could conceivably be pronounced 'fish' and calling someone's necklace 'gaudy' could be considered complimentary. If Anglo-Saxon seems dusty, dead and buried here's where we'll bring it back to life; by taking a peep at its remarkable alphabet and at the glories of *Beowulf*. We'll also examine later literary classics, and show you how to bluff your way through even the most rigorous literary questioning, by giving you quick analyses of the more unusual poetic forms, from tankas to ghazals. Read on!

LOVELY LINGUISTICS

Have you ever wondered why the furry canine quadruped you think of as a dog is called a 'dog'? Or why a cat is called a 'cat', or a pangolin a 'pangolin'? (A pangolin is a

scaly anteater usually found in Africa or Asia by the way.) Linguistics is the study of language and how it relates to thought. The term comes from the Latin word '*lingua*' meaning 'tongue'. Working in several different specialist disciplines, linguists cunningly investigate how language in general - be it Spanish, Swahili or Swedish - works. Knowing a bit about some linguistic fields of study can be an illuminating experience, encouraging us to look at the structure and use of our own language in a new light.

- **Phonetics** is the study of how we physically articulate the sounds we use to create language, the acoustics of these sounds and how we hear them.
- **Phonology** is the study of the patterns of sound that are used to create words. Different languages obey different rules in the way they use sounds, but there are also similarities between them - all languages have syllables for example. Most languages generally use between twenty and sixty basic speech sounds, called **phonemes** (good old British English has about forty-four), but how each of these sounds is perceived and represented on the page varies. As well as investigating the sound systems of different languages, phonologists also research regional accents and dialects within the same language.
- **Morphology** is the study of the structure of words, covering such exhilarating areas as inflection, derivation and the creation of compounds. The basic units of meaning that combine to make words are called **morphemes**. You can have both **free morphemes**, which can stand alone as words, such as 'lucky' and 'cow'; and also **bound morphemes** which can only make sense attached to a free morpheme; such as 'un-' in 'unlucky' and '-s' in 'cows'.

- **Syntax** is the study of the structure of sentences. Syntax and morphology together make up what we call **grammar**.
- **Language acquisition** is the study of how children and adults learn languages. One famous theory from this field is that of **universal grammar**, which postulates that all humans have the same innate concept of the rules of language.
- **Pragmatics** is the study of how people communicate in specific contexts, often in ways that don't express their meaning directly in words. For example, if someone says to you 'Have you got the time?' you are unlikely (unless you are feeling particularly discourteous) to just reply 'yes' as if their question were literal.
- **Semantics** is the study of how meaning is expressed in language: scholars of semantics study the relationship between words and the things and ideas that they represent: for example, the relationship between an Asian or African scaly anteater and the word 'pangolin'.

SLIPPERY SEMANTICS: SEMANTIC DRIFT

Semantic drift (also known as **semantic shift** or **change**) is the process by which words change their meanings over time. Here are some examples of how semantic drift can occur:

Pejoration: This is when a word's meaning develops previously unheld negative connotations. An example of this is the history of the word 'gaudy'. It comes from the Latin verb '*gaudere*' meaning 'to rejoice' and in Middle English the word 'gaud' came to mean

a rosary bead as the rosary was considered a cheery prayer. However, it gradually came to refer to the bead itself as an ornament, and finally in modern English to mean tasteless and showy.

Amelioration: This is when a word's meaning develops positive connotations. For example, the word 'nice' comes from the Latin word '*nescius*' meaning 'ignorant'. This meaning changed in Old French to 'silly' and it was this interpretation that was adopted in Middle English. Over time the meaning shifted again to mean 'agreeable'.

Specialisation: This is when a word's meaning becomes more limited and specific over time. For example, the word 'deer' in Old English just meant 'animal' but now it means a specific type of animal (a brownish grazing mammal with hooves and appealing eyes at risk of losing its mother to nasty hunters).

Generalisation: This is when a word's meaning becomes broader over time. For example, the word 'pigeon' came from the Old French word '*pijon*' which used to mean 'young dove' but now refers to any member of the dove family, even the oldest and scraggiest of those sorry excuses for avian creation that haunt our city centres.

DICTIONARY ETIQUETTE: UNDERSTANDING THE PHONETIC ALPHABET

When you peek into the treasure trove that is a dictionary (a mindbroadening exercise you should ideally undertake every day) there are arcane

instructions on how to pronounce many of the words written next to the entries. Because some letters of the alphabet can be pronounced in different ways these instructions use an alphabet called the **International Phonetic Alphabet** (IPA). In this alphabet the symbols can only refer to one sound. Some dictionaries use their own phonetic alphabet but this is the most commonly recognised one.

g – got	ɛ – pet	ɔɪ – paw
tʃ – ch icken	ə – ago	uɪ – too
dʒ – gin	ɪ – pit	laɪ – cry
x – lo ch	i – busty	aʊ – how
ŋ – sing	ɒ – pot	eɪ – pay
θ – th ing	ʌ – sun	əʊ – no
ð – fa th er	ʊ – put	ɪə – ear
ʃ – sh ip	ɑɪ – harm	ɔɪ – toy
ʒ – ple as ure	ɛɪ – air	ʊə – door
j – y es	əɪ – her	laɪə – hire
a – ha t	iɪ – pee	aʊə – hour

The stressed syllable in a word is indicated by the mark ' positioned just before the syllable.

There are many other IPA symbols for sounds in different languages, including the symbol || which stands for one of the clicking noises used in the click languages of southern Africa.

‘GHOTI’, PRONOUNCED ‘FISH’

Since the early days of the dictionary, various campaigners ranging from Benjamin Franklin and George Bernard Shaw to the Spelling Society have sought to reform the English

language by regulating the spelling of our words. Because so much of our mother tongue has come down to us from different languages and dialects over the ages, words don't necessarily look on the page the way they should logically be pronounced. English is considered one of the hardest languages to learn because there are so many exceptions to the rules of spelling and pronunciation, and some think this puts us at a disadvantage in achieving high literacy levels.

One illustration used to show the illogical nature of English spelling is the example that the word 'fish' could, obeying different rules inherent in the language, be written as 'ghoti': in words like 'cough' and 'rough' the 'gh' is pronounced as an 'f'; in 'women' the 'o' sounds like an 'i'; and in 'station' or 'nation' the 'ti' becomes a 'sh' sound.

Other languages such as Dutch and Norwegian have been modernised by government intervention but English has been left alone to grow like a wild and anarchic forest of different species of words, each of which obeys its own rules and carries the marks of its own unique history. A humorous idea of how our language might look, were reforms to be made, was explored in a piece that is often attributed to Mark Twain, although its true source is unconfirmed.

A Plan for the Improvement of English Spelling

For example, in Year 1 that useless letter 'c' would be dropped to be replaced either by 'k' or 's', and likewise 'x' would no longer be part of the alphabet. The only case in which 'c' would be retained would be the 'ch' formation, which will be dealt with later.

Year 2 might reform 'w' spelling, so that which and one would take the same konsonant, wile Year 3

might well abolish 'y' replacing it with 'i' and Iear 4 might fiks the 'g/j' anomali wonse and for all.

Jenerally, then, the improvement would kontinue iear bai iear with Iear 5 doing awai with useless double konsonants, and Iears 6-12 or so modifaiing vowlz and the rimeining voist and unvoist konsonants.

Bai Iear 15 or sou, it wud fainali bi posibl tu meik ius ov thi ridandant letez 'c', 'y' and 'x' - bai now jast a memori in the maindz ov ould doderez - tu riplais 'ch', 'sh' and 'th' rispektivli. Fainali, xen, aafte sam 20 iers ov orxogrefkl riform, wi wud hev a lojikl, kohirnt speling in ius xrewawt xe Ingliy-spiking werld.

DR JOHNSON AND HIS DICTIONARY

Staffordshire's lexicographical luminary Samuel Johnson was born in Lichfield on 18 September 1709. His father was a bookseller and Johnson himself was a great reader, which evidently helped him in his future career as poet, critic, playwright, essayist, biographer, editor and sparkling conversationalist. However, it is the work he undertook between 1747 and 1755 for which he is most gratefully remembered today. During this time Johnson relentlessly gathered together definitions for 42,773 words in his *Dictionary of the English Language*, nearly 2,000 of which remain in today's *Oxford English Dictionary*. Unfortunately, 'fopnoodle' meaning 'fool' and 'dandiprat' meaning 'urchin' are no longer included, and Johnson's lively definition for 'oats' - 'a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people' - has also changed. Although Johnson's was not the earliest English dictionary it was the first to use quotations to demonstrate how words were used and its quality and scope meant that

it remained extraordinarily influential right up until the twentieth century. The venerable doctor (he was made Doctor of Law's by both Dublin and Oxford Universities) died on 13 December 1784 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

In homage to the great word wizard, we will now present you with some useful, yet under-appreciated, words to enhance your vocabulary.

Ascesis: extreme self-discipline. 'Franklin is of an ascetic bent; he never drinks.'

Blandiloquence: flattering speech. 'His blandiloquence led me to go home with him.'

Caesious: bluish or greyish green. 'Her dress was a rather dull caesious colour.'

Deliquesce: to become liquid. 'Hurry, the cheese has begun to deliquesce.'

Ferruginous: containing iron or rust-coloured. 'His ferruginous hair clashed with his damson smoking jacket.'

Gallimaufry: a jumble. 'I'm afraid my CV is a bit of a gallimaufry.'

Hosel: the socket in the head of a golf club. 'Your problem is that your hosel is too big.'

Imbroglia: a complicated situation. 'I note that you have been involved in something of an imbroglia with your manager.'

Jacquerie: a peasant rebellion. 'I hear that Patty has been inciting a jacquerie in the staff room.'

Kerf: the cut made by a saw. 'Charlie's efforts at hiding his DIY projects were undone when Lucy spotted the kerfs in the kitchen table.'

Luculent: clear or bright. 'My darling, your luculent eyes have transfixed me.'

Mendicant: begging or a beggar. 'Marcie has married a mendicant.'

Nullipara: a female who has never given birth. 'Forgive my sister's insensitivity; she is nulliparous.'

Ochlocracy: mob rule. 'Patty is in some ways responsible for the current ochlocracy.'

Paillette: a large sequin or spangle. 'Sally says that paillettes are a must for the autumn.'

Quietus: death. 'Olaf's quietus was a relief for everyone.'

Redact: to edit. 'He is an excellent redactor and the newspaper would be lost without him.'

Sempiternal: eternal. 'Olaf has gone to a place of sempiternal rest.'

Thews: muscular strength. 'Charlie is somewhat lacking in thews.'

Ululate: to howl. 'We hardly had any sleep. Andy was ululating all night.'

Vesicate: to blister. 'These shoes are inclined to vesicate my feet.'

Welkin: the sky. 'The welkin is looking very blue today.'

Xeric: very dry. 'Pour me a drink; I'm feeling xeric.'

Yantra: an object used in meditation. 'Unfortunately, Violet left her yantra on the bus.'

Zucchetto: a skullcap worn by Roman Catholic clerics. 'Shermy's zucchetto looks very snazzy.'

APOSTROPHE CATASTROPHE: HOW TO USE APOSTROPHES

Surprising though it may seem, wandering around our towns and cities, there are only two uses for the apostrophe in the English language. It seems every other sign has either a plethora of the little fellows unnecessarily jostling the letters beneath, or, more commonly, there's a gaping hole where an appropriate apostrophe should be.

A greengrocer's apostrophe is a term used to indicate the overenthusiastic misuse of an apostrophe in a plural, and refers to the handwritten signs on market stalls that are all too frequently incorrect: 'a bunch of banana's' for example, or 'six pear's for a pound'. The problem occurs because the possessive and the plural in the English language often sound the same. You must always be vigilant against making these mistakes, which have brought such calumny on the honest trade of greengrocery.

Apostrophes should be used only to indicate **contraction** or **omission** and **possession**.

Contraction/Omission

Apostrophes are inserted into words to mark where letters have been removed to shorten a word or phrase. *We'll*, *could've* and *mightn't* are all common examples and show that such contraction usually takes place in informal English. It can also occur for poetic effect as with *e'er* or *heav'n* in order to shorten the syllables of a word to maintain a rhythm. Logically enough, the apostrophe should appear where the relevant letters are missing.

Possession

This tends to be the area where people get confused. To signify that an object belongs to someone or something

else, an apostrophe followed by an 's' is placed after the noun that is doing the possessing:

The chipmunk's cheeks

A traitor's kiss

The children's lollipops

If you miss an apostrophe showing possession you will be sending an entirely different message to that intended:

Steves Cafe

This means a place where many men called Steve have bacon sandwiches and tea, as opposed to a cafe belonging to Steve.

For singular nouns that end in 's', you can just add the apostrophe and not the extra 's' if it sounds clumsy to include it:

For goodness' sake

Plural nouns, ending in 's' add the apostrophe after the 's' but do not have an additional possessive 's'.

The cars' headlamps

ITS AND IT'S

People often get in a pickle when working out how to use apostrophes with that innocuous little word 'it'.

'It's' is a contraction of 'it is'; the apostrophe is replacing the missing letter 'i'.

'Its' is the possessive version of it: 'The dog has eaten its ball.'

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: THE CORRECT USE OF WHOM, NOT WHO

The old 'who/whom' mistake is so prevalent in modern - especially spoken - English that it's almost beyond recovery, but we'll have a go.

'Who' is a subject pronoun, which means it should be used to ask or indicate which person performs an action or is in a certain condition:

Who fixed the washing machine?

Who is in a funk?

In both the above instances, the 'who' in question would be the subject of the corresponding non-interrogative sentence:

Emil fixed the washing machine.

Gustav is in a funk.

'Whom' is an object pronoun which means it is used to ask which person receives an action:

About whom are you talking?

In the answer to this question, the 'whom' would be the object of the sentence:

I am talking about Eloise.

People commonly use 'who' or 'whom' interchangeably without understanding that they have specific purposes. Mistakes are common in both direct questions such as 'Who did you go to the ice rink with?' (this is wrong because your ice-skating pal is the object of the sentence) and in indirect use such as 'Nancy expressed doubts about who she could trust' (again, the person Nancy can or

cannot trust is the object of the sentence so 'whom' should be used). Sometimes people erroneously use 'whom' where a 'who' should be in order to sound more formal: 'Whom invited you to tea at the palace?'; 'He was a man whom I knew would make a good leader.'

The easiest way to make sure you're on the right track is to check whether you could substitute 'he' or 'him' in the answer to the question you're asking. Anywhere you'd use a 'he' needs a 'who' and anywhere you'd use a 'him' needs a 'whom': 'I went to the ice rink with him'; 'Nancy could trust him'; 'He invited me to tea at the palace.'; 'I knew he would make a good leader.'

TWENTY CLASSIC WORKS TO READ FOR A FULL EDUCATION

Who can say what it means to be truly well read? So many worthwhile books are published every year (and often obscured by dreadful ones) that it is impossible to keep up. What makes a book 'good' is also often a source of argument. However, you can always turn to the tried and trusted hits of the past to reassure yourself that you are spending your precious time reading only the quality shizzle. Whether you believe there should be a canon of intellectually valuable literature or not, certain classics have stood the test of time and engaged hearts and minds for generations. Below we have a selected a very partial list of the works of some authors who have continued to influence other writers and entrance readers long after their deaths.

The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Hound of the Baskervilles by Arthur Conan Doyle
Middlemarch by George Eliot
Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert
North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell
Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy
The Odyssey by Homer
Les Misérables by Victor Hugo
The Turn of the Screw by Henry James
Moby-Dick by Herman Melville
Paradise Lost by John Milton
Hamlet by William Shakespeare
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson
War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy
Lady Windermere's Fan by Oscar Wilde

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM: SOME DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF LITERARY THEORY

Everyone loves a good natter about books – whether it be a chuckle over the latest chick-lit novel over tea and biscuits or a tutorial on the poems of Ezra Pound. When it comes to highbrow literature it's impossible to stop people talking and writing about their interpretations and evaluations of different texts: the plethora of pages that have been used up discussing the works of Shakespeare alone would fill a small cathedral. The purpose of literary theory and criticism is to approach works of literature from different angles in order to deepen our understanding of them. The results of this close scrutiny can sometimes be surprising and, over time, different schools of thought have developed which disagree over the most fruitful way to dissect texts.

Although the practice of literary criticism began back in ancient times, the twentieth century saw an unparalleled breadth and depth of activity in this area, which extended to include methods of analysing culture in general. For example feminist, Marxist and psychoanalytical critical theory can be applied equally to art and film as to literature (and we investigate these schools of thought in the Drama and Film Studies chapter). It's hard to imagine what a humble sixteenth-century poet would think of a post-structuralist interpretation of his odes but this doesn't make this kind of analysis any less interesting or valid. Below we briefly summarise three of the major trends in literary theory that still influence critical studies today.

New Criticism (c.1935-1960)

This school of theory was developed by American scholars such as John Crowe Ransom who wrote *The New Criticism* (1941), which gives the movement its snappy name, and Allen Tate. It built on the work of British critics such as T. S. Eliot and I. A. Richards and advocated close-reading of the text of poems without reference to their biographical or historical context or the reader's response. The **Russian Formalists** developed similar ideas in the early 1900s, focusing on analysing the literary devices used in texts. Their work became influential in the Western world in the 1960s.

Structuralism (c.1910s-1970s)

Structuralism was not a clearly defined movement and it covered many different fields beyond literary theory, including anthropology, film studies and psychoanalysis. The central idea of structuralism was to interpret texts with close attention to the use of language in the light of **semiotics** (the study of signs and symbols in communication). The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is commonly regarded as the founder of this school of

thought, and it was developed further in the 1950s by critics such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. There is some blurring of the boundaries between structuralism and **post-structuralism** which is seen to have followed it, and which includes the work of critics like the philosopher Jacques Derrida who argued that there is no stable and absolute meaning to be found in language or texts (Derrida's theories are also known as **deconstruction**).

New Historicism (1980s-)

The French thinker Michel Foucault was also influential in the establishment of the New Historicist approach to literature. New Historicism looks at texts in the light of their historical context and also investigates what literature tells us about history. Stephen Greenblatt is the most well-known New Historicist working today.

A CONTROVERSIAL CRITIC: F. R. LEAVIS

Frank Raymond Leavis (1895–1978), more commonly known as the more serious-sounding F. R. Leavis, was one of the most influential British literary critics of the twentieth century. He was born in Cambridge and then studied and worked at the university there, gaining a reputation as an original, and pugnacious tutor and critic. He was influenced by the work of I. A. Richards whose *Practical Criticism* (1929) encouraged focus on the text rather than context. In 1929 he married Queenie Roth, with whom he worked closely. In 1932 he took up the post of editor of the periodical *Scrutiny*, and published *New Bearings in English Poetry*, while Queenie published her significant work, *Fiction and the Reading Public*. Leavis passionately believed that literature was central to the cultural life of the country. He had strong and influential views on which authors

were worth appreciation and study, and admired those who had a serious moral purpose. Not keen on Spenser, Milton, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne, he championed John Donne, Alexander Pope, Gerard Manley Hopkins, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. In the field of novel writing he had no time for Laurence Sterne and Thomas Hardy (and also originally Charles Dickens although he later relented on that front) but was a fan of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence. Many credit Leavis with elevating the study of English literature to the level of a serious and important subject for the first time.

MODERN MASTERS: TEN MODERN CLASSICS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Who knows what F. R. Leavis would make of the list below. However these ten books have been celebrated by modern critics for their originality, scope and quality of prose. They are all well worth a look.

Waterland by Graham Swift (1983)

Money by Martin Amis (1984)

Oranges are Not the Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson (1985)

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood (1985)

Beloved by Toni Morrison (1987)

The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro (1989)

Possession by A. S. Byatt (1990)

Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh (1993)

Every Man for Himself by Beryl Bainbridge (1996)

Atonement by Ian McEwan (2001)

A VARIETY OF VERSES: UNUSUAL POETIC FORMS

You may know your terza rima from your sestina, and your sonnet from your villanelle, but there is a wild array of dramatically different poetic forms out there with their own elaborate rules just waiting for you to discover them. We've picked just a few below, to show you the versatility and scope of available frames upon which you can stretch out the canvas of your own creativity, should you so wish.

Form

Characteristics

Tanka

Tanka are Japanese poems involving 31 syllables. In English they tend to be split into lines of 5, 7, 5, 7 and 7 syllables. They are an ancient cousin of the more famous haiku (which consist of seventeen syllables) and originally dealt with feelings rather than nature and the seasons, as haiku do.

Pantoum

Pantoums, developed from a Malaysian verse form, are written in quatrains (four-line stanzas) with the second and fourth lines of each stanza reappearing as the first and third lines of the next.

Acrostic

Acrostics are clever-dick poems where the initial letters in each line spell out a word vertically. They pop up in the Old Testament, but their most famous creator was the ever-inventive Lewis Carroll.

Ghazal

Ghazals developed in twelfth-century Persia. They are normally short love poems written in discrete couplets in the rhyming scheme aa ba ca da ea

which usefully end with a reference to the poet's name.

Clerihew

A clerihew is a light-hearted poem of two rhyming couplets describing a person whose name makes up the first line and with a long final line. They were invented by Edmund Clerihew Bentley in the early twentieth century.

BEOWULF

*Hwæt. We Gardena in gear-dagum,
peodcyninga, prym gefrunon,
hu ða æpelingas ellen fremedon*

Lo, we have heard of the power of the Spear-Danes of olden times, and their people-kings, and how their noblemen performed great deeds.

Beowulf is the most important literary work we have from the Anglo-Saxon period. It is by an unknown poet and is thought to have been written sometime between the eighth and early eleventh centuries CE. It is composed in Old English (called *Englisc* by its speakers and Anglo-Saxon by some commentators), the language spoken in England after the arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes from Denmark and Germany in the fifth century up until the Norman invasion in 1066. Over time the original Germanic language spoken by these peoples altered and took in words from Celtic, Norse and Latin, and eventually developed, via Middle English, into the language we speak today. However, on the page Old English doesn't look much like our mother tongue. Like German, its nouns and adjectives were divided into declensions and genders, and there were

four main regional dialects: West Saxon, Mercian, Northumbrian and Kentish.

THE OLD ENGLISH ALPHABET

Ǻ	Ǣ	B	C	D	Ð	E	F	Ʒ	h	I	L
a	ash	be	c	de	eth	e	eff	yogh	há	i	ell
a	æ	b	c	d	ð	e	f	Ʒ(g)	h	i	l
M	N	O	P	R	S	T	U	ƿ	X	Y	Þ
emm	enn	o	pe	err	ess	te	u	wynn	eks	yr	thorn
m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u	p(w)	x	y	þ

Thorn and eth are pronounced like 'th' in 'thin'.

Yogh is pronounced as a 'g', 'gh' or 'y'. Because its use declined in the sixteenth century and it looks like a 'z' it was often printed using this character, which explains why Sir Menzies Campbell's name is pronounced 'Ming-iss' and why Detective Superintendent Andrew Dalziel of *Dalziel and Pascoe* fame pronounces his name 'Dee-yell'.

Beowulf was written in the West Saxon dialect. It is 3,182 lines long and follows the traditional Old English verse form which divides each line in two with a caesura and links the two halves using alliteration. It also features many kennings, which are metaphorical reworkings of words – such as 'whale road' for 'sea'. The poem describes the adventures of the mythological hero Beowulf, a warrior and

later king of the Geats, a people who lived in southern Sweden. At the start of the poem he helps out the king of Denmark by defeating a terrifying man-eating monster called Grendel who is giving him trouble, and also finishing off Grendel's mother. Later, when Beowulf has returned to the Geats, a dragon goes on the rampage and Beowulf has to fight it, eventually killing it but being mortally wounded in the struggle. The poem is a tremendously beautiful work of art, well worth poring over on a wintery afternoon, and Seamus Heaney's recent translation of it is a masterwork in its own right.

A PORTRAIT OF A POEM: WILLIAM BLAKE'S 'LONDON'

William Blake was born in London's Soho in 1757, the son of a hosier. He began writing poetry at the age of twelve and was apprenticed to an engraver at fourteen. Blake produced a unique body of work, adorning his poems with his own engravings, which he also printed and published. His work presented a singular and potent vision, passionately attesting to the power of imagination to lead humankind back to a state of innocence and contentment founded in God and nature. Though deeply religious, Blake quickly lost faith in the organised Church and believed mankind was drifting further away from grace through the venality of modern life, the sacrifices made to industrialisation and the failure of the Church to offer succour to the increasing number of society's victims he saw in London. In addition, there was a political strand to Blake's work and he was at the centre of radical thought of his age, along with friends like Mary Wollstonecraft and Thomas Paine. As such, though impossible to categorise, he exerted a strong influence over the developing Romantic movement and has subsequently been a touchstone for

generations of visionary creators. His central theme of accessing a hitherto suppressed or oppressed innocence through the imagination has had great impact on successive artists and poets ranging from Samuel Palmer to W.B. Yeats.

'London'

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

This poem was published in 1794 as part of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, a collection of poems divided into two, often closely corresponding, parts representing Blake's hopes (the innocence poems) and fears (the experience poems) for humanity.

'London' is in many ways a typical example of Blake's early style, especially in its strict adherence to a simple rhyme scheme (abab) and rhythm (iambic tetrameter). In this instance, the use of these devices, along with that of repetition (particularly in the first two stanzas), not only echoes the poet's footsteps as he tramps through a dismal city, but also creates a relentlessness that complements the despairing scenes he witnesses. Blake's characteristically simple choice of vocabulary powerfully employed makes for a stark depiction of the city and adds to the growing sense of futility as the poem progresses.

In the first stanza, the 'charter'd' streets and river form a contrast to the more usual romantic view of the freedom of great cities and the boundlessness of the flowing Thames (whose 'sweet will' Wordsworth praises in 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge', for example). Here, 'to charter' refers not only to the traditional rights extended to some, though not all, city-dwellers, but was also coming to mean 'to limit' and 'to hire'. As such, the boundaries imposed by the streets and river resemble a prison constructed by figures representing authority and capitalism.

The poem proceeds to list the desperate sights of the metropolis, the claustrophobia of the city expressed in 'every ban', an allusion to government legislation limiting freedoms, while the 'mind-forg'd manacles' articulate the very Blakean sentiment of man's failure to emancipate himself by releasing the imagination.

In the third stanza, the 'Chimney-sweeper's cry' draws attention to the plight of child labourers, frequently the personification of innocence abused in Blake's poetry, while the 'black'ning Church' rather than offering relief from suffering, simply 'appalls'. The 'hapless Soldier' in the following lines is the victim of war and chaos, rather than

the perpetrator, and this distinction further imbues the poem with the sense of despotic and irresponsible powers destroying guiltless lives. Indeed, the palace walls running with blood in the subsequent line is a direct reference to the upheavals and bloodshed of the French Revolution – a cataclysm that resounded across Europe and one that should have offered hope to the common man, but had by the time of this poem already degenerated into another kind of tyranny.

Worse still, the final stanza returns to another common theme of Blake's; 'the Harlot's curse' is a verbal one but refers also to the devastating spread of gonorrhoea, which caused blindness at birth, and so in being passed on to the innocent infant forms a fatal cycle of deprivation and death represented by the horrifying oxymoron of the 'Marriage hearse'. In this way, the poem builds to an ever more despairing finale and shows Blake at his most damning and apocalyptic. All very cheery.

A COMPLETE LIST OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

If you ask anyone at your local pub to guess how many plays all-round genius William Shakespeare wrote in his stellar career, the chances are they will pitch their estimate too low. Thirty-seven is the magic number, with not a dud among them, and that doesn't include the ones that scholars suspect got lost along the way.

HISTORIES

Henry VI, Part 2

Henry VI, Part 3

Henry VI, Part 1

Richard III