Unseen poetry: Appreciating life

Teacher guidance · 32 marks

Apply best fit to the whole response. These are possible routes, not required points; reward other interpretations supported by the poems. Q27.1 assesses AO1 and AO2, Q27.2 AO2 only. Biographical context and comparison are not required in 27.1.

Question 27.1 - 24 marks: AO1 and AO2

The repeated personification of life as a seller makes beauty something available yet worth deliberate commitment; consider what the commercial metaphor values and what it rejects.

The sensory lists move through sight, sound, smell, affection and spiritual experience. Track the expansion rather than only naming imagery.

The cup simile makes children receptive to wonder; the curve of gold gives music imagined shape and value.

The final movement shifts from description to commands. The contrasts of one hour/many years and a breath/all you have intensify the claim while leaving its extremity open to discussion.

Indicative assessment bands

21-24: A sustained interpretation with precise evidence; perceptive exploration of how language, form and structure shape the response.

17-20: A developed interpretation supported by well-chosen details; thoughtful explanation of methods and their effects.

13-16: A clear, supported understanding; explanation of relevant poetic choices and meanings.

9-12: Some explained ideas and relevant references; some explanation of how particular choices work.

5-8: A simple relevant response with supporting details; basic comments about poetic choices.

1-4: A few relevant observations; limited reference or recognition of a poetic choice.

0: No relevant response.

Question 27.2 - 8 marks: AO2 comparison

Compare Teasdale’s selling/buying metaphor with Davies’s language of time and poverty: both redefine what makes a life rich.

Compare the repeated opening of Barter’s early stanzas with Leisure’s repeated No time: abundance is offered in one and missed in the other.

Compare the final imperative appeal with the circular return to stand and stare; both urge attention, through invitation and rebuke respectively.

Indicative assessment bands

7-8: A precise, insightful comparison explaining how different or similar poetic choices create meaning.

5-6: A developed comparison explaining effects of relevant methods in both poems.

3-4: Relevant connections with some comment on how methods affect meaning.

1-2: A simple connection or observation about one or both poems, with limited attention to methods.

0: No relevant response.

Text credits

Sara Teasdale, Barter (Love Songs (1917)).

W. H. Davies, Leisure (Songs of Joy and Others (1911); poem transcription).