

LI: To understand the content, context and devices used in *My Last Duchess* by Robert Browning.

- 1. Read the poem through once on page 14 in the booklet and pay attention to the annotations next to it as you read.** What are your first impressions of the poem? What mood is set? What do you think the poem might be about?
- 2. Read over the information on page 15 on context, themes and structure.** Now, create a mind- map or bullet-point list reducing this information into key points.
- 3. Next, read the poem through again.** Highlight/ underline any **language devices** you see being used in one colour. Next to these highlighted points, **annotate the effect** of these techniques. Refer to terminology in the glossary.
- 4. Now, read the poem again.** Using a different colour highlighter/ pen, identify any **structural devices** used and, just like with language, **annotate the effect** of the structure. Refer to terminology in the glossary.
- 5. What links to context can be seen within the poem?** Highlight and annotate.
- 6. What links to themes can be seen within the poem?** Highlight and annotate.
- 7. Now, listen to the GCSEPods on *My Last Duchess*-** there are several short pods so make sure you listen to them all. As you listen, add key information to your annotations or create a mind-map/ bullet- point list of key information as you listen.

8. Finally, answer all of the following questions based on the poem:

My Last Duchess

1. What form does this poem take and who's the speaker?
2. What type of word is "my" and why is it important here?
3. What is used as a symbol of control the Duke has over his wife now?
4. How is caesura used in the poem? Give an example and explain the effect.
5. What gift does the Duke say he gave his wife? What does this suggest about the context of the poem?
6. Look at line 38. Which verb suggests extreme negative feeling towards his wife?
7. "I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together." How is this ambiguous?
8. Who is the Duke talking to and why?
9. What's the second piece of art the Duke mentions? What's the significance?
10. What do you think the tone of this poem is? Why?
11. What message do you think the poet is trying to convey within this poem?

Challenge tasks:

1. How has Browning presented the theme of Power in *My Last Duchess*? Use WETTER plus links to context to form your response.
2. How has Browning presented the theme of Conflict between the speaker and the Duchess? Use WETTER plus links to context to form your response.
3. Which other poems that you have seen so far could you link *My Last Duchess* to and why? Compare writers' intentions in both poems.