**AQA Power and Conflict Poems**

The poems explore different aspects of ‘power’ and ‘conflict’ in our world, both from the past and in the present. For example, several of the poems focus specifically on the devastating effects of war. This includes the loss of life (e.g. Charge of the Light Brigade), experiences of trauma (e.g. Remains) and the displacement of whole groups of people (e.g. The Émigrée). Other poems focus on how power is resisted and challenged. This might be connected to criticism of how power is wielded by those in control (e.g. London) or through a refusal to accept established historical ‘truths’ and narratives (e.g. Checking Out Me History). Remember: the concepts of ‘power’ and ‘conflict’ are complex and we should think creatively about how to make connections between the poems.

* **Titles**
	+ Exposure Exposure to the elements **+** exposure to the truth about the realities of war
	+ Storm on the Island Literal storm **+** political storm (i.e. The Troubles)
	+ Remains Literal remains of the looter **+** on-going trauma experienced by the speaker
* **Repetition**
	+ Exposure ‘*But nothing happens’* **→** emphasises feelings disempowerment **+** sense of futility
	+ London ‘*every’* **→** emphasises the widespread misery of the inhabitants
	+ Light Brigade *‘Rode the six hundred’* **→** *‘Not the six hundred’* **→** *‘Left of six hundred’* **→** tracking
	+ Checking History ‘*Dem tell me*’ **→** Eurocentric narratives taught in schools exclude global perspectives
* **Contrasts**
	+ The Prelude *‘little boat’* **+** *‘huge peak’* **→** ‘*glittering light*’ **+** ‘*darkness*’ **→** sublime to terrifying
	+ My Last Duchess *‘Notice Neptune, though, taming a seahorse’* **→** projection of relationship
	+ Exposure *‘Shivering ranks of grey’* **+** *‘crusted dark-red jewels’* **→** cold and heat (and blood)
	+ War Photographer *‘Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh’* **+** *‘Rural England’* **→** danger and safety
* **Symbolism**
	+ Poppies *‘blackthorns’* **→** connotations of religious sacrifice
	+ Tissue *‘Paper that lets the light shine through’* **→** associated with life, growth and truth
	+ Checking History *‘Bandage up me eye’* **→** emphasises the denial of cultural and historical knowledge
	+ Kamikaze *‘samurai sword’* **→** evokes the concepts of honour and loyalty
* **Form**
	+ My Last Duchess Syntax **→** more fragmented as the focus shifts to the Duchess’s behaviour
	+ Remains Enjambment **→** contrast between causal, conversation narration **+** disturbing details
	+ Checking History Free verse **→** rejection of traditional, European poetic forms