

WORKSHEET

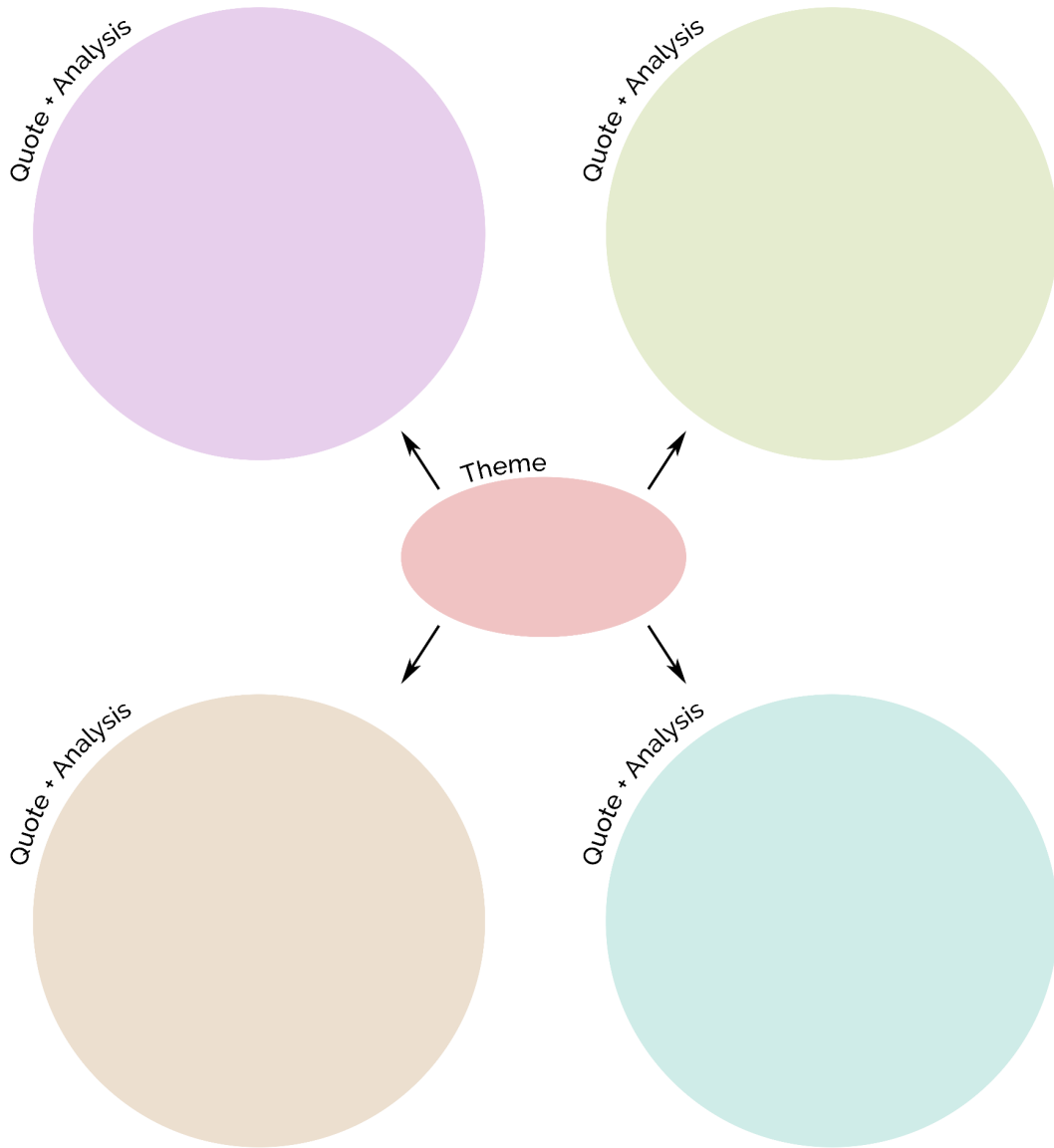
The Jaguar

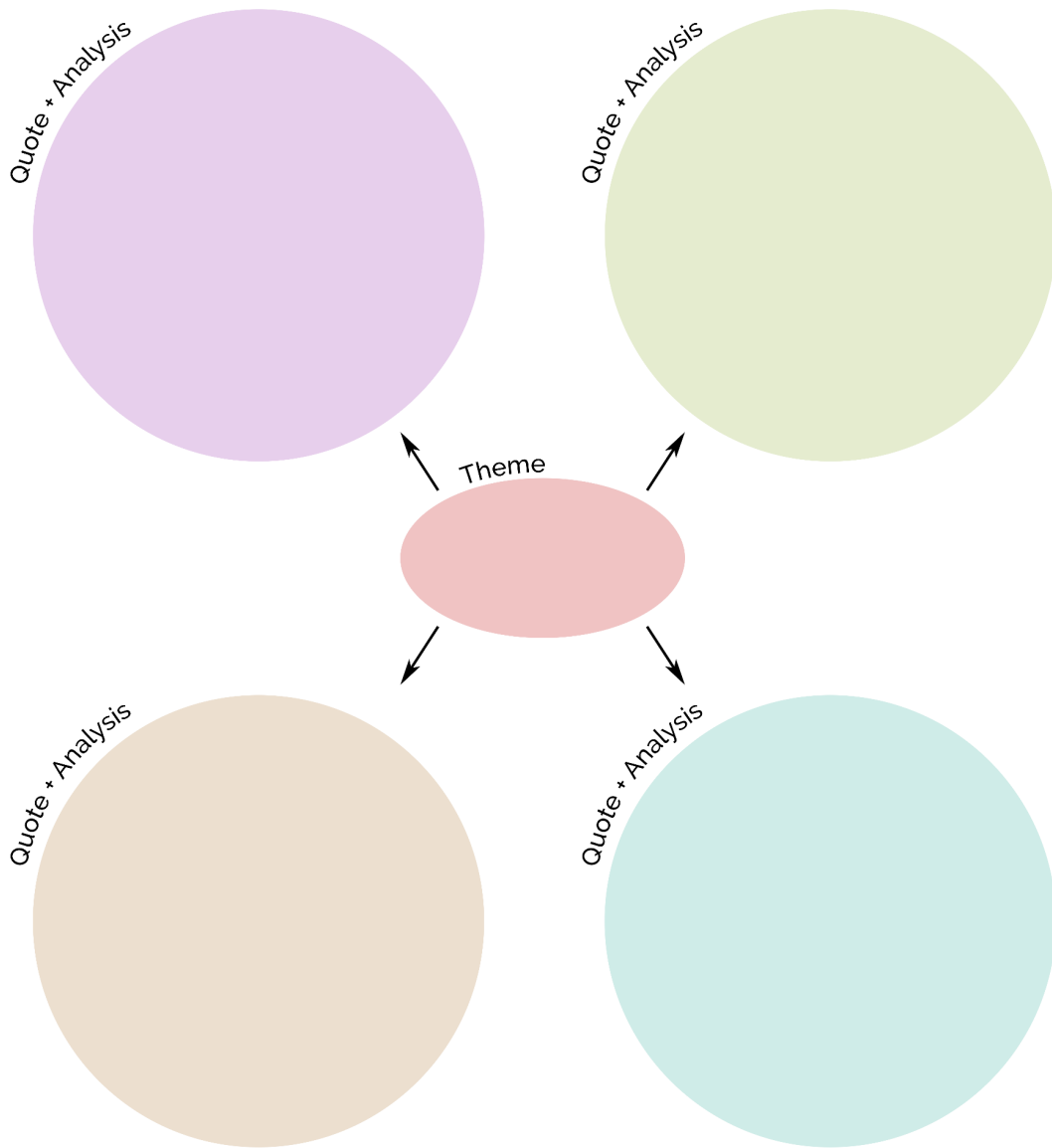
Ted Hughes

TASKS

1a. Pick two of these themes, then make a mind map for each by adding four separate quotations from the story that relate to them. Make short notes of analysis, explaining how and why each one relates to your theme.

- The relationship between humans and nature
- The cycle of life and death
- The power of the natural world
- The fragility of life
- The beauty of nature
- Romanticism
- The Sublime





1b. What, in your opinion, is the author’s final message or statement about each theme that you chose?

2. Research the idea of 'The Sublime' in poetry, focusing on Romantic poets in particular. What is this phenomenon, and how does it apply to 'The Jaguar'?

3. Read ‘Tyger, Tyger’ by William Blake (a Romantic poet). What similarities and differences can you find between Blake’s Tyger and Hughes’ Jaguar?

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat.
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp.
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

4. If you have time, read a further three poems: Hughes' 'Second look at a Jaguar', 'Jaguar Skin', and Rilke's 'The Panther'. Compare and contrast the presentation of the wild cat in all five poems.

The Panther

His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
has grown so weary that it cannot hold
anything else. It seems to him there are
a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world.

As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,
the movement of his powerful soft strides
is like a ritual dance around a center
in which a mighty will stands paralyzed.

Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly--. An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

5. Hughes and Plath's daughter, Frieda, was born in 1960. In an interview, the couple talk about taking her regularly on trips to the zoo so that they could observe animals there (Plath speaks of enjoying watching the seals bark in the sun) - this kind of activity, therefore, seems to have been a regular pastime for Hughes, even before his daughter served as a convenient excuse to visit the zoo.

What's your own attitude to zoos? Write down some of your own observations at zoos, thinking about whether you liked the experience or not, and why. Try to describe some of the animals you remember seeing there in detail, using precise language.

6. Describe a jaguar, lion or tiger that you’ve seen - either in real life, or in film. Use poetic and descriptive language, as well as poetic features, to try and capture the feeling of the animal.

EXERCISES

1. What does the jaguar represent in Ted Hughes' poem "The Jaguar"?

2. What is the tone conveyed in the poem “The Jaguar” by Ted Hughes?

3. What key messages does the poet convey in the poem?

4. What are the characteristics that separate the jaguar from the rest of the animals in the zoo?

5. What is the moral lesson of Hughes' poem "The Jaguar"? Discuss your opinion with the help of evidence from the poem.

PRACTICE ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does the poet convey ideas about freedom and captivity by describing the jaguar?
2. In what way does Hughes explore the power of nature in the poem?
3. How far can we feel sorry for the jaguar in the poem?