WHAT IS AN UNSEEN QUESTION?

An Unseen question or exam paper is one where you're given an extract or poem that you've never seen before and you have to answer and respond to the question and text at that moment.

Even though you haven't seen the text previously, it doesn't mean that you can't prepare for the exam. There are so many ways to prepare for an unseen paper, we'll go over these together.

How To Prepare for an Unseen Question

- Revise all your terminology (similes, metaphors, repetition), understand the effects of language.
- Practice unseen past papers that are similar to your own exam.
- Work closely with mark schemes.
- Practice planning answers to questions.
- Revise your form (either poetry or prose).

Types of Unseen Questions:

Thematic: How does the poet present the speaker's <u>feelings</u> about <u>her daughter?</u>

Character-based: How does the poet <u>make us feel</u> about <u>the woman</u> in the poem?

Comparative: Write about <u>both</u> poems and their <u>effect on you</u>.

Examples of Unseen Questions

GCSE:

In 'To a Daughter Leaving Home', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about her daughter?

In 'The Road Not Taken', how does the poet present ideas about making important decisions?

A-LEVEL:

Explore the significance of moral attitudes in this extract from 'Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit'. Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Winterson shapes meanings.

Planning Your Answer:

- Read the question first and underline keywords.
- Read the poem or extract and underline anything that relates to your focus.
- Refine your ideas and annotate them.
- Plan your intro/thesis and your paragraphs.

How will the Unseen Answers be Marked?

- Depends on your level and exam board - understand specific mark schemes.
- Structuring a good essay answer - intro / thesis / paragraphs / conclusion.
- Writing style - good essay vocabulary - formal, detached, objective, transition words, terminology.
- Your 'personal' response to the question (thesis).
- Your analysis - how and why language works in a certain way, how this links to the question, and your thesis.
- NOT marked on prior knowledge or context.