

Reading...

Poetry at Advanced Higher

Textual Analysis: Poetry

The Windhover¹

To Christ Our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing.

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

Gerard Manley Hopkins²

Task

Prepare a textual analysis of this poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Your analysis should focus on such features as:

- **Poetic form** (ie. ballad, ode, elegy, sonnet, prose poem etc.)
- **Structure** (ie. how lines are divided up, how sentences are put together etc.)
- **Poetic voice/persona (ie. speaker and their situation)**
- **Word choice (ie. any lexical choice that is particularly striking/odd)**
- **Imagery** (ie. metaphors, similes, personification, transferred epithet etc.)
- **Rhyme** (ie. masculine or feminine, internal rhyme or end rhyme)
- **Sound** (ie. alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance etc.)

You should take **40 minutes** to **highlight** and **annotate** your poem. Don't cheat by googling!

¹ Windhover is another name for kestrel birds.

² Gerard Manley Hopkins was a Jesuit priest.

Extension

Now listen to this short episode of Frank Skinner's *Poetry Podcast*.
<https://planetradio.co.uk/podcasts/frank-skinner-poetry-podcast/>

In this episode Frank Skinner prepares his own **textual analysis** of the poem. Mark your own annotations against Skinner's interpretation. Use the table to take notes as you listen.



Technique	What Frank Skinner says about it...	Your thoughts...
Poetic Form		
Structure		
Poetic Voice/Persona		
Word Choice		
Imagery		
Sound		