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| **Literature Paper 2 Section B: Anthology Poetry****Learning compendium****‘Storm on the Island’** |
| Key ideas\*On one level the poem described the experience of a group of islanders who live off the coast of Ireland during a storm.\*Heaney seems to suggest that the natural world is more powerful than humans; the people on the island are extremely isolated and can do little to protect themselves for the ferocity of the weather.\*Fear and the power of nature also seem to come from the unpredictability and uncertainty of the wind and the weather. No one knows what the wind will do and what each storm will bring.\*On another level the poem may be viewed as having a more deeper or symbolic meaning. The first eight letters of the poem’s title spell ‘Stormont’. This is the name given to Northern Ireland’s parliament buildings. This hints that the ‘storm’ could be about some of the violent political disturbances that Ireland has experienced. For example between Catholics and Protestants and/or Irish republicans wanting independence from Britain.  |
| Form and structureThe poem is one stanza of 19 lines long.It uses blank verse. This verse form follows the natural patterns of spoken English so we feel that the speaker is talking to us.The use of first person plural ‘we’ could show how this is a collective, communal experience.There is a turning point at line 14 which changes from a sense of security through the use of factual language to fear through a shift to vivid violent imagery. |
| LanguageThe poem has a sense of drama as it is written in present tense.Semantic field of conflict/warUse of military language which suggests that the islanders are under attack: ‘pummels’, ‘exploding’, ‘dives’, ‘strafes’, ‘salvo’ and ‘bombarded’.Violent imageryVerb use: ‘blows (full) blast’, ‘pummels’, ‘exploding’, ‘hits’, ‘spits’, ‘dives’, ‘strafes’ and ‘bombarded’.Sound‘Blast’ verb and plosive create a forceful sound.‘Tragic chorus’ metaphor: the lack of trees/ hedges etc suggest that the islanders have no protection from the wind. They face the full brunt of the storm unprotected.Line 15 onwards use of sibilance represents the noise of the spray from the waves on the windows and the sound of the wind. ‘…the flung spray hits/the very windows’- personification of the wind‘…spits like a tame cat/ Turned savage’ – use of simile and enjambment represents the unpredictability of the weather and how familiar objects become strange/ unfamiliar.Metaphor/ extended metaphorThe cottage represents safety from the weather. The speaker describes how their houses are ‘squat’ and made of ‘rock’. This shows the power of man to create protection from the weather. Despite this the speaker admits that they are still afraid. (‘It is a huge nothing that we fear’---‘huge nothing’--oxymoron)Heaney uses the extended metaphor of the storm to describe the conflict in Northern Ireland in the second half of the twentieth century. |
| Feelings and attitudesSafety and fearIsolation and helplessness |
| ThemesThe power of natureHumanity versus natureFear and isolation |
| Compare with…‘Exposure’ (power of nature/ weather)‘Prelude’ (power of nature)Other war poems. |
| Key quotations ‘blows (full) blast’, ‘pummels’, ‘exploding’, ‘hits’, ‘spits’, ‘dives’, ‘strafes’ and ‘bombarded’.‘…spits like a tame cat/ Turned savage’‘…huge nothing…’ |
| Glossary**Squat**– crouch **Slate –** bluish-grey rock **Wizened –** dried up; shrivelled **Stacks -** haystacks **Stooks** – a group of grain stalks **Chorus** – song **Gale** – a very strong wind **Pummels** – strike repeatedly **Strafes** – bombards; harasses with artillery shells **Salvo** – simultaneous firing of artillery **Bombarded** – attack continually |