

TEXT	FOUR POEMS
AUTHOR	Emily Brontë
THEMES	Against all odds (Unit 7), Exploited, endangered ... extinct (Unit 15), Who do you look up to? (Unit 16)
VOCABULARY	-en verbs and words to describe seasons and times of day.
WRITING	Students write an email about the weather in their country and its significance.
SPEAKING	Students talk about the senses.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Emily Jane Brontë (1818–1848) was an English novelist and poet who is best known for her novel *Wuthering Heights*, which is considered a classic of English literature. It was the only novel she published. She also published a book of poetry with her sisters, Charlotte and Anne. Emily was the second-youngest of the four surviving Brontë siblings, between the youngest Anne and her brother Branwell. She published under the pen name Ellis Bell. At that time, it was difficult for women writers to be accepted by publishers, so she used a man's name.

WARMER

Focus on the photograph. Ask students to describe what they see. They should imagine they are describing the picture to someone who can't see it. Try to get them to give as much detail as possible. Help with vocabulary as necessary. Then ask them to write a sentence saying what the person in the picture is thinking. They should write this in the first person. Stress that there are no right or wrong answers. Students read out and compare their ideas.

ABOUT YOU

The questions get students thinking about what they like and dislike about different times of year and day. If your students live in a place where the weather doesn't change very much, ask them to imagine what it would be like to live in a place where it does, and vice versa. If there is general agreement ('we like the summer') encourage them to suggest why some people might have a different opinion (winter sports, starting a new school year, etc.).

- 1 After reading, ask for ideas and suggestions (evening, sunset, dusk, etc.). Focus on the words or phrases students noticed which told them what time of year it is in the poems (autumn, winter).

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Suggested answers

- 1 The question focuses attention on repetition and rhyme. Repeated words include *fall*, *darkening*, *and*, *cannot*, *go* and *mists*. Students might also highlight combinations like *darker/darkening* (polyptoton) and these are also a form of lexical repetition. Rhymes are used throughout, sometimes in couplets and sometimes with an alternating rhyme scheme. Reasons for using rhyme and repetition include emphasis, musicality, balance and creating atmosphere and they also highlight the psychological and emotional voice of the poet.
- 2 This is an open question of interpretation as the writer does not explain exactly why she 'cannot go', but one possible interpretation is that she is captured by the 'spell' of the moment. There is something almost magical about the atmosphere and although it might, on one level, seem to be an unappealing location, it stimulates and engages the writer imaginatively and emotionally.
- 3 You might want to give a couple of examples to focus the idea of personification such as 'It was a happy house,' or 'the lonely sea'. Examples include 'every leaf speaks happiness', 'the day has wept', 'spent its sorrow', 'as thick as ... tears', (a simile personification), 'lonely landscape', 'come sighing'.
- 4 Personification often communicates an emotional relationship to external things, when our feelings extend to the world we experience around us.

VOCABULARY

- 3 As well as doing the exercise and checking the answers, it could be useful to look at the morphology related to combinations like *dark* – *darkness* – *darken*, partly because the -en verb describing a process might be unfamiliar, but also because the spelling changes are often unpredictable. As examples, you could show students the relationship between *strong* (adjective) and *strength* (noun) or *high* (adjective) and *height* (noun).

Answers

- 1 sorrow 2 horizon 3 wastes 4 decay

4

Answers

- 1 their fill 2 darkening 3 shorten 4 lengthen

WRITING

- 5 The format of the email means there are four questions to answer about the influence of the weather on people's lives. Suggest students use these as paragraph topics. They should follow the conventions of an email – greeting/main body/sign off, but the main body can be presented in four paragraphs addressing the questions. Point out that the paragraphs don't have to be the same length.

SPEAKING

- 6 You might begin by just asking for the names of the five senses, and ask some general questions – ‘Which senses are most connected to memory?’, ‘Do some people have some senses that are stronger than others?’, ‘How does our sense of taste change as we get older?’. The discussion questions personalise the topic. Monitor and help with vocabulary as required and make notes on useful words/expressions to share with the whole class later.

MIXED ABILITY

In a topic speaking activity like this, you can give the stronger students the task of note-taking with the aim of summarising their group’s ideas when the whole class comes together to compare ideas and comments. This will often result in them making more of an effort to check and clarify what people say as the activity takes place. Weaker students can focus on expressing their thoughts while stronger ones prepare this extra task.