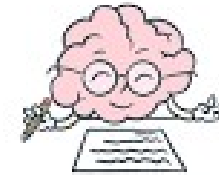
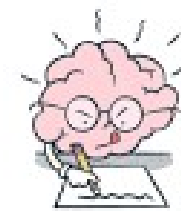


English Revision Session: The Emigree.

Starter for Five:

Brain dump anything you can remember about 'The Emigree.'

3 minutes- brain dump independently.
2 minutes- share ideas with the person next to you.



Tuesday 10th January.



The Emigreee.

What is the poem about?

The speaker in the poem has fled her home country due to some form of conflict. They do not feel like they belong in their new country and explore the power of memory through positive imagery of their childhood.

The poem deliberately avoids tying itself to a particular context, instead looking more generally at the emigrant experience—with all its trauma and nostalgic longing for home.



The Emigree.

Let's read the poem.

There once was a country... I left it as a child
but my memory of it is sunlight-clear
for it seems I never saw it in that November
which, I am told, comes to the mildest city.
The worst news I receive of it cannot break
my original view, the bright, filled paperweight.
It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants,
but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.

The white streets of that city, the graceful slopes
glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks
and the frontiers rise between us, close like waves.
That child's vocabulary I carried here
like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar.
Soon I shall have every coloured molecule of it.
It may by now be a lie, banned by the state
but I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.

I have no passport, there's no way back at all
but my city comes to me in its own white plane.
It lies down in front of me, docile as paper;
I comb its hair and love its shining eyes.
My city takes me dancing through the city
of walls. They accuse me of absence, they circle me.
They accuse me of being dark in their free city.
My city hides behind me. They mutter death,
and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight.



The Emigreee.

Meaning/main messages of the poem:

- The Emigrée is, in large part, about the nature of memories—particularly childhood memories. While also exploring some of the traumatic effects of exile, the poem shows how memory can give people strength—something to hold onto even when everything else around them has changed.
- The poem tries to convey the pain and confusion of the emigrant experience—to get across an impression of what it is like to have to leave your home behind. Implicitly, the poem implores its readers not to take their own comforts for granted.



The Emigreee.

Complete the cloze activity in your booklet:



The Emigree.

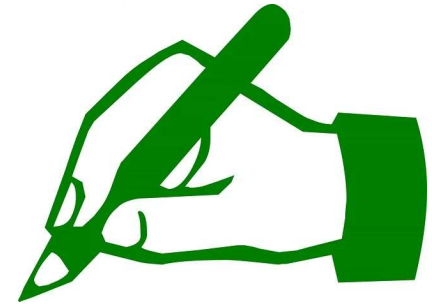
Conflict
Dearly
Light
Flee
Child

Language
Memories
Violence
Comfort

The poem is about an emigrant who has been forced to _____ her country due to _____. Even though she left her home city as a _____, it continues to have a strong hold on her; she refuses to let any of these _____ be tarnished by news she hears about the _____ and tyranny in the place she calls home.

In order to fit in with her new home, the speaker needs to take on new _____ and customs. But doing so too much would risk erasing her relationship with original home, which is why she holds onto her first language and childhood memories so _____. The speaker continues the semantic field of _____ when describing her home city to imply the warmth, hope and _____ that these memories provide.

The Emigreee.



The poem is about an emigrant who has been forced to **flee** her country due to **conflict**. Even though she left her home city as a **child**, it continues to have a strong hold on her; she refuses to let any of these **memories** be tarnished by news she hears about the **violence** and tyranny in the place she calls home.

In order to fit in with her new home, the speaker needs to take on new **language** and customs. But doing so too much would risk erasing her relationship with original home, which is why she holds onto her first language and childhood memories so **dearly**. The speaker continues the semantic field of **light** when describing her home city to imply the warmth, hope and **comfort** that these memories provide.



The Emigree: Golden Quotations



Metaphor- she is describing her memories as a paperweight.

A paper weight is an office item designed to prevent paperwork from becoming scattered on the desk- it keeps things in one place.

'The bright filled paperweight.'

The adjective 'bright' continues the semantic field of light, presenting how positively she views her home city.

The noun 'paperweight' implies that she is choosing to 'fix' her memories and hold them tightly in one place. She will not have them altered- despite what she might hear about the country now she has fled.



The Emigree: Golden Quotations.

This quotation uses juxtaposition to present her contrasting viewpoints about her home city and where she lives now.

'My city takes me dancing through the city of walls.'

The possessive pronoun 'my' shows the sense of belonging she felt in her native city.

This is then juxtaposed by 'the city' which shows the detachment she feels from her new home- she does not belong there.

Energetic verb 'dancing.' Memories of her home city provide escapism- the connotations of dancing include freedom, movement, joy, expressing yourself etc.

This is then juxtaposed by her current city 'the city of walls.'

Connotations of walls include restriction, limitations, entrapment.

She feels both mentally and physically trapped in her new home.



The Emigree: Structure

Repetition of sunlight.

Note how each stanza ends with the word 'sunlight.'

The repeated references to sunlight suggest the speaker has an idealised, almost dream-like picture of the past, where it is always positive. By ending with this word, it shows that despite the darker sides of her home city, her memories will remain untainted.



The Emigree: plenary/exit ticket.

Imagine this is your exam question:

Compare how the power of memory is presented in 'The Emigree' and one other poem.

- 1) Decide which poem you would compare with.
- 2) Write down one point of comparison between the poems.

