About the Poet

Jane Weir is a textile designer as well as a poet.

See if you can find and underline the references to textiles/material or clothing in the poem.

To know the emotional and physical conflicts presented in the poem ‘Poppies’.  
To understand how Weir explores the theme of conflict in ‘Poppies’.  
To be able to explain how Weir presents strong feelings to loss and conflict in ‘Poppies’.
Before you left, I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals, spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade of yellow bias binding around your blazer.

.....smoothed down your shirt's upturned collar,....

All my words flattened, rolled, turned into felt..

my stomach busy making tucks, darts, pleats, hat-less, without a winter coat or reinforcements of scarf, gloves

...ornamental stitch...

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Objective: To know the emotional and physical conflicts presented in the poem ‘Poppies’. To understand how Weir explores the theme of conflict in ‘Poppies’. To be able to explain how Weir presents strong feelings to loss and conflict in ‘Poppies’.
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<th>Band</th>
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| Band 6 | * evaluation of writers’ uses of language and/or structure and/or form and effects on readers  
* convincing/imaginative interpretation of ideas/themes |
| Band 5 | * analysis of writers’ uses of language and/or structure and/or form and effects on readers  
* exploration of ideas/themes |
| Band 4 | * appreciation/consideration of writers’ uses of language and/or structure and/or form and effects on readers  
* thoughtful consideration of ideas/themes |
| Band 3 | * explanation of effect(s) of writers’ uses of language and/or structure and/or form and effects on readers  
* understanding of ideas/themes/feelings/attitudes |
| Band 2 | * identification of effect(s) of writer’s choices of language and/or structure and/or form intended/achieved  
* awareness of ideas/themes/feelings/attitudes |
| Band 1 | * awareness of writer making choice(s) of language and/or structure and/or form  
* generalisation(s) about ideas/themes/feelings/attitudes |
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  * awareness of ideas/themes/feelings/attitudes |
| Band 3 | * awareness of writer making choice(s) of language and/or structure and/or form  
  * generalisation(s) about ideas/themes/feelings/attitudes |
| Band 2 | * simple identification of method(s)  
  * some range of explicit meanings given |
| Band 1 | * reference to writers’ method(s)  
  * simple comment on meaning(s) |
Keywords

grief- deep or intense sorrow or distress over the death of someone

hope- to desire and consider something possible
Poems about war and conflict are often written from the viewpoint of: MEN or WOMEN?

Keywords: grief, hope

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Shortly after the Royal British Legion was formed in 1921, the poppy was adopted as its symbol.

The poem ‘In Flanders Field’ by John Macrae (written in 1915) is part of the reason, but it is also one of the few flowers able to survive in an area severely damaged by fighting.

The poppy is a symbol of **HOPE**.

Jane Weir was commissioned to write this poem as part of a piece called ‘Exit Wounds’ published in the newspaper ‘The Guardian’ just before the Iraq war enquiry in July 2009.

It is written from the viewpoint of a mother just about to see her son go off to war.

**Keywords:** grief, hope
Three days before Armistice Sunday and poppies had already been placed on individual war graves. Before you left, I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals, spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade of yellow bias binding around your blazer. Sellotape bandaged around my hand, I rounded up as many white cat hairs as I could, smoothed down your shirt’s upturned collar, steeled the softening of my face. I wanted to graze my nose across the tip of your nose, play at being Eskimos like we did when you were little. I resisted the impulse to run my fingers through the gelled blackthorns of your hair. All my words flattened, rolled, turned into felt, War kills individuals, so loss is personal.

First person narrative – makes it sound personal. Makes the reader think of an injured body. An image of being wounded. ALLITERATION emphasises that she’s trying to be brave and not show emotion. METAPHOR suggests that he’s no longer a child because he’s gelled his hair.

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slightly melting. I was brave, as I walked with you, to the front door, threw it open, the *world overflowing like a treasure chest*. A split second and you were away, intoxicated.

After you'd gone I went into your bedroom, released a song bird from its cage. Later a *single dove* flew from the pear tree, and this is where it has led me, skirting the church yard walls, my stomach busy making tucks, darts, pleats, hat-less, without a winter coat or *reinforcements* of scarf, gloves.

On reaching the top of the hill I traced the *inscriptions on the war memorial*, leaned against it *like a wishbone*. The dove pulled freely against the sky, *an ornamental stitch*. I listened, hoping to hear your playground voice catching on the wind.

**ENJAMBMENT** – gives an impression of someone's thoughts and feelings

**SIMILE** shows the world from her son's perspective

**METAPHOR** - symbolic of her son leaving

Doves are a symbol of peace but also of mourning

Battle imagery makes her seem vulnerable

A reminder of the risks her son faces

Strong visual image hints at her wish for his safety

Strong visual image of something small and beautiful in a vast space represents her son

Keywords: grief, hope

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Exam Questions

Foundation January 2013

Compare how the poets present thoughts about those who have died in ‘Poppies’ (page 41) and in one other poem from Conflict.

Remember to compare:

- what the thoughts are
- how the poets present these thoughts by the ways they write. (36 marks)

Higher January 2012

Compare how poets use language to present strong feelings in ‘Poppies’ (page 41) and one other poem from Conflict. (36 marks)

Keywords: grief, hope

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Reflect and Review

Discuss with the person next to you the notes you have.

- Is this a poem about war or a poem about families?
- What impression does the poet give you of the mother through the things that she does?
- Do you think the son is still alive?
- What clues does the poem give you?
- How do you think the title relates to the poem?

Add these ideas to your notes.

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