

GCSE English Quiz

Poetry - Hawk Roosting

Ted Hughes was a twentieth-century English poet. His work was highly-regarded: he received many awards and much praise for his poetry during his lifetime, and was made Poet Laureate in 1984. Much of his earlier poetry explores the natural world, focussing on its primal, non-romanticised essence. This poem, 'Hawk Roosting', is a good example.

Read the poem slowly, then test your analytical skills with this quiz.



Hawk Roosting

*I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
Inaction, no falsifying dream
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.*

*The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth's face upward for my inspection.*

*My feet are locked upon the rough bark.
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot*

*Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly -
I kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads -*

*The allotment of death.
For the one path of my flight is direct
Through the bones of the living.
No arguments assert my right:*

*The sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.*

Ted Hughes

1. Who is the 'I' of the first line?

- The poet
- The hawk
- The reader
- A murderer

2. What is the hawk doing at the beginning of the poem?

- Looking for a kill
- Practising flying
- Resting
- Tearing off heads

3. Find examples of the language Hughes uses to express the violent mood of the poem.

- Falsifying, rehearse, inspection, sophistry
- Kills, lock, tearing, assert
- Inaction, revolve, bones, permitted
- Buoyancy, rough, direct, right

4. The mood, while violent, is also one of...

- fascination with nature
- disgust with the hawk
- humour
- indifference

5. Looking again at the words which express violence and comparing these with the poem, you will see that it is the images, more than individual words, which fully convey the mood. Which one of the following images does NOT contribute to the violence of the poem?

- 'It took the whole of Creation/To produce my foot, my each feather'
- 'Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly --'
- 'The one path of my flight is direct/Through the bones of the living'
- 'Now I hold Creation in my foot'

6. 'Juxtaposition' is to place two things / ideas / words side by side in order to invite comparison or contrast. In which line(s) do we find juxtaposition?

- Line 1
- Lines 10-12
- Line 20
- Lines 23-24

7. What is the significance of these words: sophistry, manners, allotment, arguments, assert, right, permitted?

- They remind the reader of the hawk's nature
- They are words which apply to people, rather than hawks
- They reinforce the mood of fascination with nature
- Hughes did not intend to use these words - he couldn't think of better choices

8. Considering the answer to question seven - this is an example of which poetic or literary device?

- Simile
- Onomatopoeia
- Personification
- Assonance

9. Why does the hawk say 'I am going to keep things like this'?

- The hawk is aware that things will change
- The hawk knows, as the sun is going down, that his death is near
- The hawk will remain in the air forever
- The way the world works suits the hawk perfectly; the views of his prey do not count

10. The hawk believes himself to be...

- almighty, all powerful
- thoughtful, sophisticated
- justified, ready to argue for his rights
- ashamed, wanting to change

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1. Who is the 'I' of the first line?

- The poet
- The hawk
- The reader
- A murderer

The voice of 'Hawk Roosting' is that of the hawk

2. What is the hawk doing at the beginning of the poem?

- Looking for a kill
- Practising flying
- Resting
- Tearing off heads

Always remember to think about the title and how it relates to the rest of the poem. Here, 'roosting' is what we find the hawk doing at the beginning of the poem; he is in a state of repose

3. Find examples of the language Hughes uses to express the violent mood of the poem.

- Falsifying, rehearse, inspection, sophistry
- Kills, lock, tearing, assert
- Inaction, revolve, bones, permitted
- Buoyancy, rough, direct, right

4. The mood, while violent, is also one of...

- fascination with nature
- disgust with the hawk
- humour
- indifference

The hawk kills because that is its nature. From its 'hooked head' to its 'hooked feet', the hawk is the deathly pinnacle of creation

5. Looking again at the words which express violence and comparing these with the poem, you will see that it is the images, more than individual words, which fully convey the mood. Which one of the following images does NOT contribute to the violence of the poem?

- 'It took the whole of Creation/To produce my foot, my each feather'
- 'Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly --'
- 'The one path of my flight is direct/Through the bones of the living'
- 'Now I hold Creation in my foot'

6. 'Juxtaposition' is to place two things / ideas / words side by side in order to invite comparison or contrast. In which line(s) do we find juxtaposition?

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The hawk, who presents this juxtaposition, seems amused by the thought that 'Creation' formed his foot and that he is now master of creation, holding it in his claw

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Hughes is writing about more than a hawk in nature. The hawk is personified, which will make the reader think about people who have the attitude the hawk has been given in the poem. Who do you think Hughes is referring to here? Killers? Tyrants? The landed gentry throughout history?

9. Why does the hawk say 'I am going to keep things like this'?

- The hawk is aware that things will change
- The hawk knows, as the sun is going down, that his death is near
- The hawk will remain in the air forever
- The way the world works suits the hawk perfectly; the views of his prey do not count

The hawk believes he can stop change; he does not 'permit' change

10. The hawk believes himself to be...

- almighty, all powerful
- thoughtful, sophisticated
- justified, ready to argue for his rights
- ashamed, wanting to change

The hawk's self-image is all powerful, almighty; he views the world, god-like, from on high