

Choose a poem which encourages you to think differently or to understand something in a new way.

Discuss how the poet's ideas and techniques led you to change your thinking or understanding.

### Example Essay 1:

The World Is Too Much With Us... by William Wordsworth is a poem that encourages the reader to think differently. In this poem's case it is too think differently about the modern world and how mankind we have been won over by technology and turned our backs on nature. The poet's skillful use of poetic technique and structure help to change the reader's thinking.

The poem is a sonnet, which means it is 14 lines long and written in iambic pentameter. First the opening quatrain introduces the theme:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

Here the reader sees the clear ABBA rhyme scheme and is introduced to the notion that mankind has moved away from nature and become obsessed with the modern world that is now 'too much with us'. Wordsworth makes it clear which aspects of the modern world he is opposed to with the phrase 'Getting and spending', he suggests that the modern world is focused on money - spending - a selfishness and greed - the Getting. By placing 'getting' at the start of the line he adds extra emphasis to it. He then goes on to note that we don't appreciate nature because we can't buy it and take it home, before crying we have given 'our hearts' away, suggesting that this was a precious emotional bond that has been broken, and it is a 'sordid boon!' This is an oxymoron because 'sordid' is a negative idea, something corrupt and dirty, while 'boon' is a benefit or something good. Overall Wordsworth forces the reader to think differently about how mankind's love affair with the modern world has ruined our connection to nature.

The poem moves on to show how nature is troubled by this. The poet writes that the sea bares her 'bosom' to the moon, showing that nature is vulnerable and seeking solace. He says that the 'winds that will be howling at all hours'. This is onomatopoeia as Wordsworth has 'hidden' the sound of the wind, represented as a mournful wolf's howl, in the line. The alliteration of 'w' and the assonance of the 'i' in 'winds', 'will' and 'howling' and then assonance of the 'ow' in 'howling' and 'hours' create this effect. Wordsworth then uses an effective metaphor to show how mankind and nature now are. "For this, for everything, we are out of tune;" just as an instrument can be in the wrong key or untuned and therefore spoil the sound of a band or orchestra, so mankind is playing differently to the rest of nature and spoiling the natural music of the world. In this quatrain the poet forces us to think differently as he shows us how terrible nature feels now mankind is no longer in harmony with it, I had not realised this before.

Then in the sestet Wordsworth reaches the sonnet's turn and shows us how he thinks he might resolve the problem. First he makes a very emotional outburst with the phrase 'Great God!' showing he is upset by how mankind is neglecting nature. Next he offers his solution: "I'd rather be a Pagan suckled in a creed out worn". So Wordsworth would rather live like they did thousands of years ago, as a Pagan, and be in harmony with nature. Here the poet's word choice of 'suckled' suggests an animalistic, or primitive way of living and raising young. This emphasises how he wants to get back to a natural way of life. "Creed" suggests it is a religious belief and central to how he wants to be. Lastly Wordsworth has a vision, he claims to be able to see two Gods rising out of the sea. "Proteus" was a Greek God of water and Wordsworth claims he can see him 'rising' which is a verb and shows he is growing more powerful because he is getting bigger. Then Wordsworth says he sees 'Triton' who was another sea god, specifically Neptune (the BIG sea god's son). "Blowing his wreathed horn". This signals that Wordsworth might believe the old gods are returning, because blowing a call on his horn is a sign for troops or an army to assemble and

begin a war. This made me think differently because it suggest we might not have completely given our hearts away, and that we maybe able to return to live in harmony with nature once again.

Overall the sonnet *The World Is Too Much With US* by William Wordsworth is a poem that makes the reader think differently about how mankind interacts with nature. It shows us how we have turned our backs on nature in favour of money. Then it shows us how this torments nature, before including a volta and making us think differently again and showing us that the old ways might return.

Supplementary marking grid

	Marks 20 - 19	Marks 18 - 16	Marks 15 - 13	Marks 12 - 10	Marks 9 - 6	Marks 5 - 0
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>  <b>The critical essay demonstrates:</b>	thorough knowledge and understanding of the text  perceptive selection of textual evidence to support line of argument which is fluently structured and expressed  perceptive focus on the demands of the question	secure knowledge and understanding of the text  detailed textual evidence to support line of thought which is coherently structured and expressed  secure focus on the demands of the question	clear knowledge and understanding of the text  clear textual evidence to support line of thought which is clearly structured and expressed  clear focus on the demands of the question	adequate knowledge and understanding of the text  adequate textual evidence to support line of thought, which is adequately structured and expressed  adequate focus on the demands of the question	limited evidence of knowledge and understanding of the text  limited textual evidence to support line of thought which is structured and expressed in a limited way  limited focus on the demands of the question	very little knowledge and understanding of the text  very little textual evidence to support line of thought which shows very little structure or clarity of expression  very little focus on the demands of the question
<b>Analysis</b>  <b>The critical essay demonstrates:</b>	perceptive analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	detailed analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	clear analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	adequate analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	limited analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	very little analysis of features of language/filmic techniques
<b>Evaluation</b>  <b>The critical essay demonstrates</b>	committed evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	engaged evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	clear evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	adequate evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	limited evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	very little evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task
<b>Technical Accuracy</b> <b>The critical essay demonstrates:</b>	few errors in spelling, grammar, sentence construction, punctuation and paragraphing  the ability to be understood at first reading				significant number of errors in spelling, grammar, sentence construction, punctuation and paragraphing which impedes understanding	

*This is a decent, functional essay. It is clearly attempting to answer the question and they know the poem. They state how the poem fits the question in the introduction, though this is not done in a great deal of detail - it feels at times a little more like they are regurgitating notes rather than making a 'genuine' answer to the question. The essay is effective, but not reaching the top level and therefore falls into the 15-13 bracket receiving a 14. The first section analyses the structure, but states that it reveals the theme without really showing how. There is clear knowledge of the text, they provide clear evidence to support this, but the line of thought and the demands of the question require the marker to 'look for them'. This is indicative of the whole essay. The next section shows a variety of techniques being analyzed - structure, sound effects, imagery. This moves the essay away from just word choice (a word choice based would pass but not by much). The next section does mention the turn, but tends to fall in to analyzing word choice. It also requires the marker to 'look' for the line of thought until the clunky last line. This clunkiness can also be seen elsewhere in the essay. The conclusion restates the line of thought, maybe not a bad thing in this essay*

### Example Essay 2:

Life today is like living in an information wind-tunnel. It's constantly blasted at you; Kanye and Kim, Vladimir Putin, your aunties lumbago, storm Doris, Selena Gomez's Instagram, Neighbour's is getting cancelled, 10 problems only ginger girls have, drunken fight in the local park, cute cat plays the drums, ancient manuscript discovered, old Trumps at it again, Celebrity death, Brexit, Sports drug cheat, 36 ways you know you're left handed, local toilet locked, Cousin Neil's holiday pictures,

Lenny Henry did it and you need a new systems update! This is just a fraction of what many of us wake up to each morning and blast in to our faces before we even get out of bed. It is true that today - The World is Too Much With Us. And how many of us, like that poems author William Wordsworth, have not dreamed of returning to some internet free prelapsarian proto-eden. However some of us, especially those born in to a world with 24/7 high speed wi-fi, smartphones and social media, may never stop to think of other possible ways of existing, of how societies and maybe even our psychologies were structured in times past. That is what this poem does, focus us to think differently, and in a time where our disconnection to the natural world may have become so extreme, where our quest for energy and rare earth materials threatens to destroy the global ecosystem, this poem's message may be more important than ever.

Wordsworth's famous sonnet begins by outlining that wind - tunnel effect in the opening lines and then asks us to think differently about it, not as a mere fact of life, not as it might have been sold to us, a crucial benefit, but as waste of our true gifts as humans:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

With the advent of the internet and smartphone, we all recognise the late and soon, as most people check their phone last thing at night and then first thing in the morning. Wordsworth is a little more specific with him next line "Getting and spending" defines exactly what he dislikes about the nature of the modern world: the centralisation of money and it's effect on the human psyche. As a sonnet the poem is primarily written in iambic pentameter, but significantly this line breaks the usual rhythm. Instead of making the first syllable unstressed, as in "The world is too much.." where the stress and emphasis is placed on the second syllable - 'world', line two stresses the first syllable, "GETT-ing and SPEND-ing". This disruption in the rhythm of the poem mirrors the disruption capitalism has brought to the natural order of things, while encouraging the reader to understand it is the focus on greed and individualism that modern capitalism brings (the 'Get' bit) that is helping to cause this.

Wordsworth then laments this change that the modern world has brought about removes us from nature. As industry lays 'waste' to the environment, people themselves 'lay waste our powers.' Wordsworth highlights how capitalism, and consumerism replace creative activities - art, poetry, charity, appreciation of what is around us - with consumption. Indeed the next line 'Little we see in Nature that is our;' shows how we can no longer conceive of nature as worthwhile - how can we buy a sunset? What is there here for us to buy and 'get'? Wordsworth shows us not just that the modern world removes us from the rhythms of nature, but it corrupts our view of things. It replaces the vastness of the natural world with a narrow ideology. The poet states that this was not stolen from us, not smuggled away, but that: 'We have given our hearts away'. This adds to the sorrowful tone, as we have no one to blame but ourselves, we have lost the most precious part of our selves acting like a cheating spouse as we betray our true partner. Wordsworth concludes by using the effective oxymoron, juxtaposing the corruption implied in the word 'sordid' with the benefit - 'boon', encapsulating perfectly his views on capitalism: it rewards us with seeming benefits, while corrupting us in the long term. A quick example; think of all the boys stuck in side, curtains drawn (shock! That a peek of natural light may get in) wrestling with FIFA on the Xbox, while playing fields and football pitches are concreted over due to lack of use.

Now, after making it clear mankind has been corrupted by capitalism and the seductive shiny things of the new age Wordsworth alters his focus slightly (as the sonnet form demands) in the second quatrain where he details the torment that nature is left in. Here he personifies nature. First he sees, 'This sea,' not a general sea, not one from the past or future sea, but this particular sea in front of, highlighting now this torment is happening now, and perhaps must be soothed now. The sea 'bares her bosom to the moon' an ambiguous image that suggesting she is vulnerable or

that she is like a mother too the moon and looking to comfort a hungry child. Then the wind is turned in to a howling wolf through the sound effect in line 6, the combination of 'w', 'l' and 'ow'/'ou' sounds in "The winds that will be howling at all hours" allows the reader to hear the suffering of nature as she cries out for eternity. Wordsworth lays on the emotion here before suggesting in the last line of the second quatrain who is to blame – "For this, for everything, we are out of tune;". It is us. This line in particular, first with its parenthesis (a synecdoche indeed – where a few words or a single item are used to represent a much larger concept) shows how these seas and winds and moon are just the start of a long list of pained natural elements. Then with the exquisite metaphor, Wordsworth compares mankind and nature to an orchestra, but one that now has a section out of tune with the rest. Capitalism and technology have changed the key of mankind and thus ruined the entire piece.

Then Wordsworth offers a solution in the poem's sestet. He deceives to reject the modern world and wishes for a future where we go back, undo the crimes of the industrial; and digital age and return to the old ways; to offer us some moment of quiet in the modern wind-tunnel world. In two short statements he rages against what we have become – "It moves us not." He says of the torment of nature. We are so far from the natural; world (headphones in, curtains drawn) that it's not just that we choose to ignore nature, it's that we are almost unaware of its presence. This then is worth the exclamation "Great God!" to show the poets utter contempt for what has gone wrong. Next comes the solution, to be a "Pagan suckled in a creed out worn." Wordsworth offers the radical answer that we need to return to worshipping nature, to find the rustic and animalistic inside us, to swap our modern cathedrals of shopping malls, and devotion to social media for an ancient code, one that we once discarded as 'outworn'. He next conjures up a vision, of himself on a 'pleasant lea', the repetition of the sound here echoing the gentle breezes around him (not the 'howling winds' from before) and see the old Pagan gods return to. First there is "Proteus rising from the sea." It is important these deities 'rise' as it suggest in Wordsworth's mind they are growing in power as more people understand they are the way to live their lives and not shackled to money and technology. Then there is "old Triton blow[ing] his wreathed horn." The poem excellently build to a climax here as Wordsworth employs anaphora through the repetition of "Have," "have" and "hear". Then evokes the readers senses by appealing to both sight and hearing, and most impressively he creates the sound of the klaxon call in the lines of the poem. Beginning in line 12 and the word 'forlorn' be build an echoing 'o' sound – it's no surprise he chose **Pr**oteus, as his god, who comes 'fr**o**m" the sea, and then "**O**r hear **o**ld Trit**o**n bl**o**w his wreathed h**o**rn". This swelling sound acts as the final part in his argument against the modern age. Triton was the great Sea god Neptune's herald. His horn signaled the arrival of the most powerful underworld deity, or the signal of attack from his forces (or both). Here Wordsworth's vision offers us a hope for the future, that these old gods who personify nature will return to do battle with our digital times and secure a victory – to win back our hearts and allow mankind once again to live in tune with our natural surroundings.

This is a bittersweet ending for a modern reader. Part of us would love to detach from the drip of modern communication, to return to a 'pleasant lea' and learn to live in harmony with the natural elements. But the suggestion of the sea waging war on us perhaps summons ideas of dramatic climate change – of world cities flooded by Neptune's forces, which would result in catastrophic consequences. Is this what it will take for us to step away from the modern world, is this what Wordsworth prophesying?

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*This essay does what the last one does, but a degree more effectively. As a marker we get the impression the writer is not simply focusing on rewriting notes and sentences to show they are thinking of the question, but they are secure in their knowledge and can explain in some depth how the poem relates to the modern world. As they do this in some detail they are a level above the previous essay. On the marking grid this essay is classed as having a 'perceptive focus on the demands.' It doesn't just repeat key phrases but understands, on a significant level how they apply to the concerns and themes of the poem. Also in the Evaluation row, we get the sense the writer has a clear 'evaluative stance.' This is similar in the 'line of thought' which in this essay is both 'fluently structured and expressed'. Like the previous essay it begins with the first quatrain and explaining how the poem fits in to the sonnet form, though this time the poetic techniques are clearly shown to add to the poem's meaning. (This analysis is taken from: <http://www.shmoop.com/world-is-too-much-with-us/rhyme-form-meter.html> ).*

*The next section notes that the second quatrain does not just extend the argument, but as a sonnet should, subtly alters it. Here the essay discusses mainly the themes, as they relate to the modern world, and therefore extends the line of thought laid out in the introduction. The essay skillfully picks out quotes, we get the feeling the writer is confident enough in their knowledge of the text to be able to zero in on a quote as opposed to quote every words and then analyse them. Instead here the essay is led by the line of thought and the evidence from the text is used to support this. The 'thorough knowledge and understanding' here does not come from extensive quoting, but very clear understanding of the theme. The section of the sestet again by explaining how this will link to the line of thought set out in the introduction, meaning the marker does not have to go looking for the question though-out the essay, but sees a clear path through. There is also a lot of analysis here; punctuation, word choice, sound effects (twice) repetition and climax are all dealt with. Here the conclusion does not just repeat the line of thought, the essay is confident the marker can follow it, and therefore actually 'concludes' this line of thought by speculating that Wordsworth may be right – but from our modern perspective, and not his 'pleasant lea' this is much more worrying. This essay clearly gets a 20/20.*

*Last notes: You don't have to agree with the poem. You could write an essay that shows understanding of Wordsworth's ideas, but then argued that this is not the way the modern world should be, that 'Getting and spending' has made us better. A kind of 'What Wordsworth Get's Wrong About Progress.'*

*You should also note a lot of the 'analysis' – the quotes, the techniques and the explanation of them – is the same in each essay. The second essay analyses the iambic pentameter, and the first does not, but other than that they make much the same points. Essay 2 makes much more out of the theme and therefore shows much more understanding of what Wordsworth was trying to communicate.*