

English Literature

Transition Activity

1. Which texts (novels, plays and poetry) did you enjoy reading and studying at GCSE? Explain what you particularly enjoyed about studying them.

2. Why have you chosen to study English Literature at A level? What was it about your GCSE course that inspires you to take this subject to a higher level?

Read the poem 'Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass' by Simon Armitage.



3. With reference to these two pictures and the wording of the title, which of these two objects might win in a fight, in your opinion? Are you surprised by the ending of the poem?

4. In what terms does Armitage describe the chainsaw? Pick out what you think are the most interesting words or phrases. Explain how these words or phrases affect your response to the chainsaw.

5. How does Armitage describe the pampas grass? Again, select what you think are the most interesting words or phrases and explain their effect.

6. How does the narrator approach the removal of the pampas grass? How easy does he think it will be? Find evidence in quotations to support what you say.

7. At what point in the poem does it become clear that the pampas grass is not going to be so easily defeated?

8. How do you think that Simon Armitage has used the form of the poem (stanza pattern, length of lines etc) to support his ideas?

9. Make a list of the oppositions in the poem.

Pampas Grass	Chainsaw

10. What do these oppositions suggest might be some of the underlying meanings of the poem? Do you think he is using symbolism? Is this a poem purely about gardening or can it be interpreted in any other ways?