

# Module 2 Year 8: Romantic Poetry

*Songs of Innocence and Experience,*  
William Blake

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Industrial Revolution

Industrial (adjective)	An <b>industrial</b> system or product is one that uses machinery, usually on a large scale.	He rejected all items made using <b>industrial</b> methods.
Natural (adjective)	<b>Natural</b> things exist or occur in nature and are not made or caused by people.	She appreciated the <b>natural</b> world when she left the chaos of London.

William Blake lived from 28 November 1757 until 12 August 1827. At this time, Britain was undergoing huge change, mainly because of the growth of the British Empire and the start of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution was a time when factories began to be built and the country changed forever. The countryside, natural and rural settings were particularly threatened and many people did not believe they were important anymore because they wanted the money and the jobs in the city.

The population of Britain grew rapidly during this period, from around 5 million people in 1700 to nearly 9 million by 1801. Many people left the countryside to seek out new job opportunities in nearby towns and cities. Others arrived from further away: from rural areas in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, for example, and from across large areas of continental Europe.

As cities expanded, they grew into centres of pollution and poverty. There were good things about the Industrial Revolution, but not for the average person – the rich factory owners and international traders began to make huge sums of money, and the gap between rich and poor began to widen as a result. Many 18th-century towns were grimy, over-crowded and generally unsanitary [dirty] places to be. London in particular suffered badly from dirt and pollution; so much so that candles were sometimes required at midday in busy shops owing to the smoggy conditions outside.

## Knowledge Check: MCQs

### a) Overcrowding in cities was due to...

1. People hating the countryside
2. People enjoying factories
3. People moving to factories to work
4. People moving to continental Europe

### b) The value of the natural world was starting to be...

1. Ignored
2. Enjoyed
3. Embraced
4. Remembered

### c) The gap between the rich and poor grew because...

1. Wealth from factories was spread across people
2. Industrialisation greatly benefitted factory owners and traders, not factory workers
3. Of overcrowding in cities leading to wealth inequality
4. Industrialisation greatly benefitted factory workers, whose wealth grew quickly

### d) Blake, who respected, loved and valued nature, would have been \_\_\_\_\_ the Industrial Revolution.

1. Interested in
2. Supportive of
3. Horrified by
4. Neutral about

# Romanticism

Liberation (noun)	<b>Liberation</b> is being freed from something that is trapping you.	They wanted <b>liberation</b> from their repetitive timetable.
Imprisonment (noun)	<b>Imprisonment</b> is being trapped.	Their feeling of <b>imprisonment</b> came from all the rules they had to follow.

Today the word 'romantic' makes us think of love, but the term 'Romanticism' has a much wider meaning. Romanticism is a movement, something that a group of people believed in and lived their lives by. It began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and ended in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Art, literature, music and philosophy all began to be Romantic, this means that they all believed similar things:

- That the modern world was changing in ways that were not good for the majority of people.
- That people needed to go "back to nature" in order to be happy.

### What the Romantics stood for:

1. Imagination
2. Emotion
3. Liberty (freedom)
4. Egalitarianism
5. Individual (doing what *you* feel is right)

### What the world at the time was interested in:

1. Rationality (wanting to know things for sure)
2. Science
3. Order and rules
4. Strict class system
5. Society (behaving as a group)

The period of history, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century, in which there was a new focus on science and reason has been called The Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. In this period of time, people became more interested in science and the scientific revolution and what they could know for sure, rather than what they believed. Many scientific discoveries and inventions including carbon dioxide and steam engines occurred. As a result, some people began to question their religious faith. Blake did not like many of the scientific changes because he thought they stopped people thinking for themselves and they challenged independence and imagination. He also did not like the rules in religion even though he was Christian because he thought they could limit and imprison people. He thought that people should be free from rules and "chains". Romanticism contrasts with The Age of Enlightenment.

Many think that a philosopher called Jean-Jacques Rousseau began the Romantic movement when he said:

'Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains.'

The Romantics wanted freedom for everyone – they wanted people to be free to think how they wanted and to behave in their own way. Romantics had a real sense of responsibility to others: they felt it was their duty to use their poetry to inform and inspire others, and to change society.

## Revolution

The Romantics were writing and making art at a time when many parts of the world were in conflict. There was a Revolution in France, when the French people had decided to rise up and kill the rich people and the monarchy. The Romantics supported this at first but then became unsure because the French Revolution caused a lot of pain and bloodshed.

## Imagination

The Romantics highlighted the healing power of the imagination, because they truly believed that it could help people to move beyond their troubles and their difficult lives.

## Egalitarianism [equality]

Romantics were concerned about the people in Britain who were marginalised and oppressed – pushed to one side and pushed down – during the Industrial Revolution. For example, William Wordsworth wanted to write poetry for ordinary people and said that poetry should be written in ‘the language really spoken by men’. Blake was radical [extreme] in his political views, frequently addressing social issues in his poems and expressing his concerns about the monarchy [kings and queens] and the church. They wanted an egalitarian world – one where everyone is equal.

## Nature

For the world to be improved, the Romantics said that it was necessary to start all over again and be like children. They believed that children were special because they were innocent and had not yet been treated badly by the world. The Romantics believed that children understood and enjoyed nature in a special way. Therefore, a significant motif in Romantic poetry is nature and children. A key idea in Romantic poetry is the concept of the sublime. This term conveys the feelings people experience when they see awesome landscapes, or find themselves in extreme situations which elicit both fear and admiration.

## Knowledge Check: MCQs

<p><b>a) The Age of Reason was a time when people valued...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reason, art, logic, order</li><li>2. Science, reason, freedom, logic</li><li>3. Religion, art, logic, order</li><li>4. Reason, science, logic, order</li></ol>	<p><b>b) Romantics rejected and rebelled against the Age of Reason because...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. They wanted to make scientific discoveries</li><li>2. They wanted to destroy the monarchy</li><li>3. They wanted to undermine the church</li><li>4. They wanted freedom for the imagination and for nature</li></ol>
<p><b>c) Romantics were attracted to revolution because...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. They wanted stability and order</li><li>2. They wanted to keep logic and reason as vital</li><li>3. They wanted society to change greatly in England</li><li>4. They wanted war and conflict in England</li></ol>	<p><b>d) Romantics believed that people should not be...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Oppressed or admired</li><li>2. Oppressed or marginalised</li><li>3. Oppressed or elevated</li><li>4. Oppressed or religious</li></ol>

## William Blake

Rebel (verb)	When someone <b>rebels</b> , they start to behave differently from other people and reject the values of society or of their parents.	I was very young and <b>rebellious</b> against everything.
Comply with (verb)	If someone or something <b>complies with</b> an order or set of rules, they are in accordance with what is required or expected.	The commander said that the army would <b>comply with</b> the agreement.

William Blake (1757 – 1827) was a famous painter and engraver during his life. However, after his death, the poems that he wrote began to attract other artists and made him a world famous poet. Blake wanted to use his poetry for a political purpose – he did not simply write to entertain. He is still considered a subversive [challenging] poet, who criticised the government and the monarchy [the royal family] with his poems and who felt that the dramatic changes that were taking place in the world around him were not good for the majority of people.

Blake wanted his poems to be understood by everyone who read them. He did not want to confuse people because he wanted everyone to be able to receive his messages about equality and the need for change. Many consider Blake a revolutionary, someone who fights for change. He was living in London in a very dramatic time because The British Empire was losing strength. Previously, the Empire had controlled lots of other countries, and now America and France were beginning to fight and demand independence from Britain. Blake agreed with these rebellions which made him very unpopular with the authorities. Blake believed that people should look closely at the society they live in and who runs it, and that they should speak up and make their voices heard. Blake worked to bring about a change both in the social order and in the minds of people.

How did Blake become so brave and creative? Blake had a pleasant and peaceful childhood; his parents supported his artistic talents. As a young boy he wandered the streets of London and could easily escape to the surrounding countryside. Blake’s poetry often focuses on nature and the power of nature – not industry – to overcome [win against] negative human control. When we are in nature, Blake believed, we learn to solve the injustices of society because only humans create unfair systems like that.

### Knowledge Check: MCQs

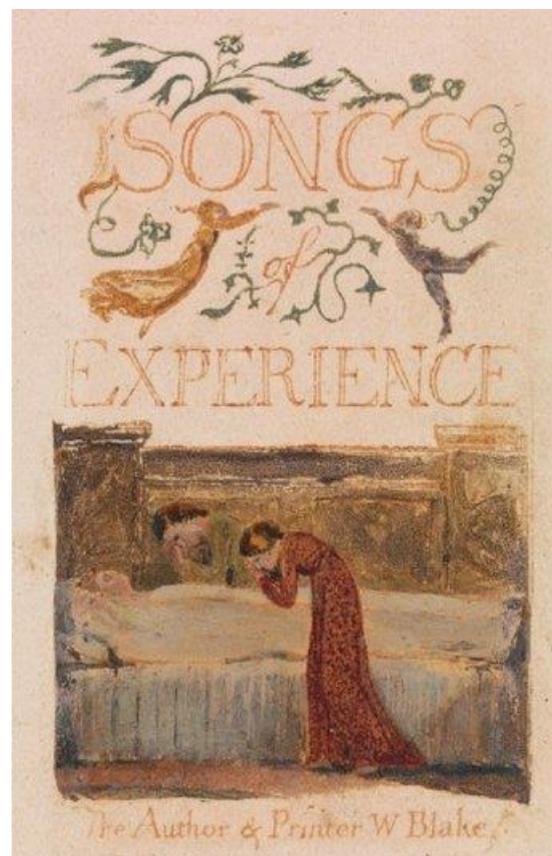
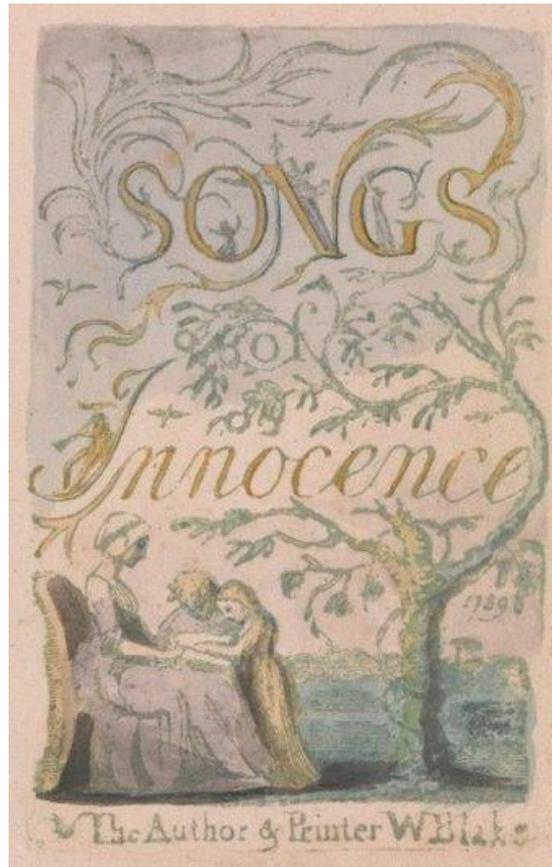
#### a) Blake rebelled against...

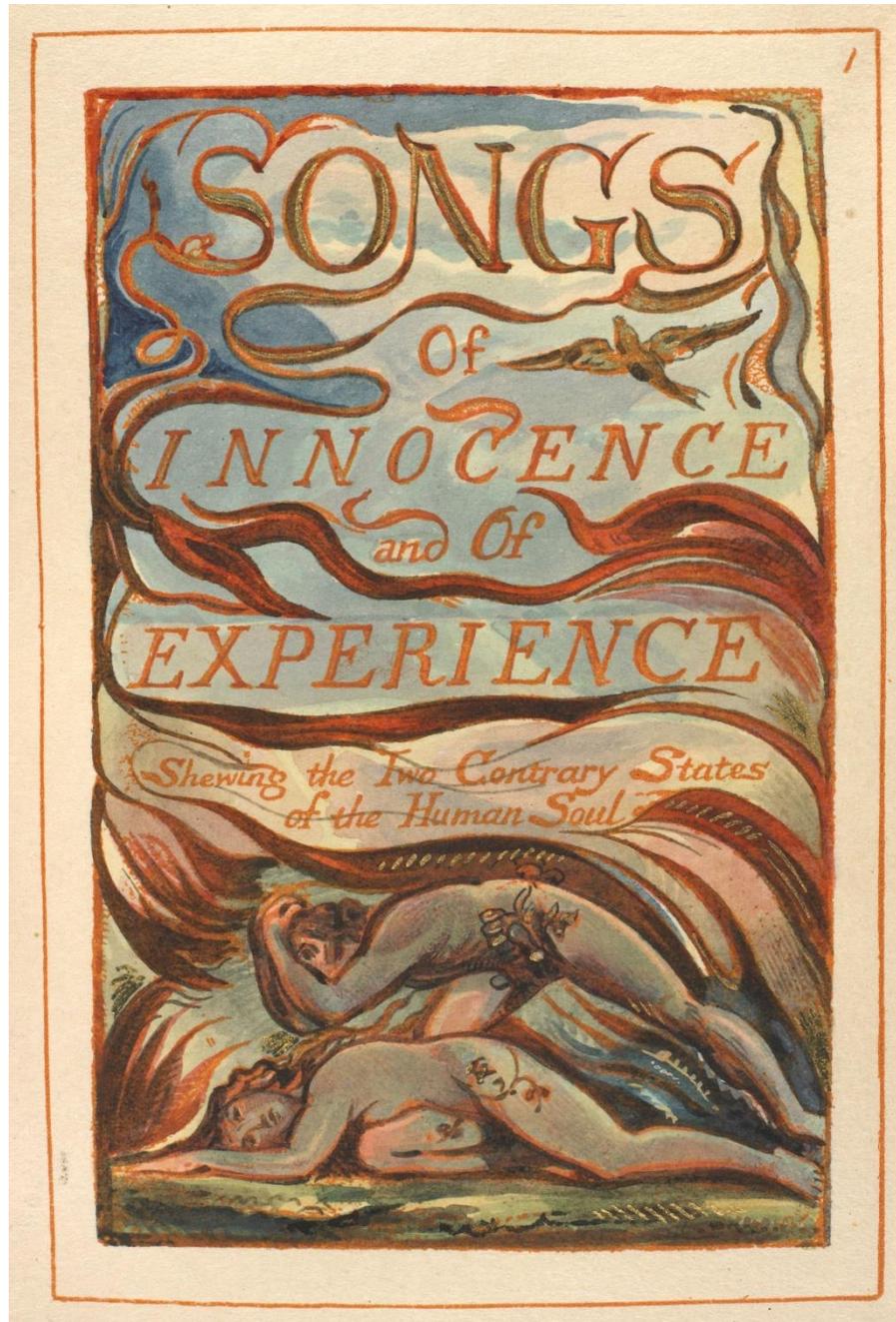
1. Nature, education and childhood
2. The monarchy, industrialisation and the British Empire
3. His parents, English Literature and entertainment
4. The social order, childhood and education

#### b) Blake felt that the role of an artist was to...

1. Make change in society and make a political statement
2. Entertain readers and create enjoyment
3. Paint a vivid picture in the reader’s mind
4. Rebel against readers and undermine their authority

# Songs of Innocence and Experience





<p>Innocent (adjective)</p>	<p>If someone is <b>innocent</b>, they have no experience or knowledge of the more complex or unpleasant aspects of life.</p>	<p>Because of his <b>innocence</b>, he didn't notice the criminal activity.</p>
<p>Corrupt (verb)</p>	<p>If someone is <b>corrupted by</b> something, it causes them to become dishonest and unjust and unable to be trusted.</p>	<p>It is sad to see a person so <b>corrupted by</b> the desire for money and power.</p>

In Songs of Innocence and of Experience, perhaps his most famous collection of poems, he investigates, as he put it in the subtitle, 'the two contrary states of the human soul'.

Often, interpretations of this collection centre around two worlds, where "Innocence" represents the "unfallen world" or the perfect world and "Experience" represents the "fallen world" or the world that is full of sin. Blake seems to argue that childhood is a state of protected innocence, but it can be affected by fallen world. This world sometimes affects childhood itself, and becomes known through "experience", losing childhood innocence through fear, social and political corruption and the oppression of Church, State and the ruling classes.

Songs of Innocence was originally a complete work first printed in 1789. It is a conceptual collection of 19 poems, engraved with artwork. This collection mainly shows happy, innocent perception in pastoral harmony, but at times, such as in "The Chimney Sweeper" and "The Little Black Boy", subtly shows the dangers of this naïve and vulnerable state.

Songs of Experience is a poetry collection of 26 poems forming the second part of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience. The poems were published in 1794.

#### **How was the work produced?**

Songs of Innocence and of Experience is regarded as both a visual and literary work of art. Blake invented a new way of printing, designing the work in reverse with varnish on metal plates, which were then etched with acid to produce relief printing surfaces; these were printed in brown ink, and the prints were coloured by hand. Only a small number of copies were made, and sold privately to friends and collectors.

#### **What are the Songs about?**

Despite the simple rhythms and rhyming patterns and the images of children, animals and flowers, the Songs are often troubling or argumentative, and reflect Blake's deeply held political beliefs and spiritual experience. Blake's vision embraces radical subjects such as poverty, child labour and abuse, the repressive nature of state and church, as well as right of children to be treated as individuals with their own desires. Many of the poems in Songs of Experience respond to counterparts in Songs of Innocence.

#### **Knowledge Check: MCQs**

**a) Blake split his poems into "Innocence" and "Experience" to reveal...**

1. That childhood is a perfect world of innocence and children remain innocent eternally
2. That childhood is an almost perfect world of innocence and adults should have children to remind them of this
3. That childhood is an almost perfect world of innocence, which gets corrupted by the experience of adulthood and society.

**b) Although the poems have simple rhymes and rhyming patterns, ...**

1. Many of the poems in Songs of Experience are in response to poems in Songs of Innocence
2. Blake expresses serious themes including his rebellious and radical political views
3. Blake avoids entering into discussions about politics and social issues

## Children and education

Nurture (verb)	If you <b>nurture</b> something such as a young child or a young plant, you care for it while it is growing and developing.	Parents want to know the best way to <b>nurture</b> and raise their child to adulthood.
Abandon (verb)	If you <b>abandon</b> a place, thing, or person, you leave the place, thing, or person permanently or for a long time, especially when you should not do so.	He claimed that his parents had <b>abandoned</b> him.

During the Industrial Revolution, many people moved from villages in the countryside to big cities to find work in the new factories. Because so many people were looking for jobs, the workers became desperate and so began working for very little money. Most employees worked 10-14 hours a day 6 days per week, with no holidays. With so many new workers moving to big cities every day, houses became more and more difficult to find, and many workers would live together in tiny houses, or even end up homeless.

Child labour was the cheapest of all. Factory owners hired children as young as six to work, and as children, they could be paid much less. In addition to being cheaper, children could also fit into smaller spaces, making them suitable for jobs such as chimney-sweeping and mining. One famous factory in London had 1,150 workers, and over 600 of those were children. The government did try to limit child labour, but factory owners argued that they were helping the poor children by giving them money to buy food and avoid starvation.

Education was once considered a privilege for only the upper class. However, during the 17th and 18th centuries, “education, literacy (reading and writing) and learning” were gradually provided to “rich and poor alike”. The increase in literacy rate was more likely due, at least in part to religious influence, since most of the schools and colleges were organized by religious organisations, who were motivated to help increase the literacy rate among the general public because the bible was being printed in more languages and literacy was thought to be the key to understanding the word of God.

However, schools were not very effective as there were too many pupils crowded into cramped buildings without enough teachers. Paying teachers could be expensive and headmasters often preferred to keep children’s school fees for themselves. The curriculum was also very narrow, teaching only classical subjects like Latin and Greek, which meant students’ education was not very broad. Blake despised this narrow-minded approach as he felt children’s intelligence should not be restricted or limited by boring, strict educational systems.

### Knowledge Check: MCQs

<p><b>a) Although education was becoming more easily available,...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Headmasters were tyrannical and abusive</li> <li>2. Schools were both crowded and limited in terms of the curriculum</li> <li>3. Religious education was seen as inferior to Greek and Latin</li> <li>4. Children were free to be creative and use their imagination</li> </ol>	<p><b>b) Although the government tried to limit child labour,...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Famous factories refused to use child labour to make a political point</li> <li>2. Factory owners tried to persuade them that by employing children they were lifting them out of poverty</li> <li>3. Children could fit into smaller spaces than adults and so were more efficient workers and necessary to the running of the country’s economy</li> </ol>
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## Religious Mysticism

Subvert (verb)	To <b>subvert</b> something like a rule or expectation means to destroy its power by going against it.	There was a plot to <b>subvert</b> the authority of the state.
Conform (verb)	If you <b>conform</b> , you behave in the way that you are expected or supposed to behave.	We <b>conformed</b> to social and family expectations.

Blake had both radical political beliefs and radical spiritual beliefs.

When Blake was 23, he made friends with people who were interested in religious mysticism. Religious mysticism a type of Christianity which does not just rely on the Bible for guidance. People who follow religious mysticism believe that they can experience god as an individual directly and without the help of the Bible or the Church. This means that they believe in visions. Blake had visions throughout his life and these influenced him greatly in his art and poetry. At the age of four, he saw God "put his head to the window," and at nine, he saw "a tree full of angels." Because of poverty and illness, these visions increased, and the world of angels and dreams made its way into Blake's highly artistic life—his poetry, engravings, and watercolours.

Blake did not believe that God was some great giant or superhuman old man up in the sky. He saw God as like an "ordinary" human being except that he is a perfect one (and therefore completely kind, good, and unselfish). Blake was interested in the story of the Prodigal Son in the Bible which is about a son who does wrong and runs away and then is welcomed back home by his father. In the Bible, the father represents God and the message is that everyone is welcomed back by God.

### Knowledge Check: MCQs

<p><b>a) Blake's spiritual beliefs were radical because...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He saw himself as a Prodigal Son</li> <li>2. He thought he could experience God without the help of the Bible or the church</li> <li>3. He made friends with people with radical political beliefs</li> <li>4. He had an artistic life, making poetry, engravings and watercolours</li> </ol>	<p><b>b) Blake refused to conform to the idea that...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We need rules and institutions for religion and that God is completely different to humans</li> <li>2. We do not need boundaries in our artistic life</li> <li>3. We need political instability to create radical revolution</li> <li>4. We need to avoid other people's ideas about politics and religion</li> </ol>
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## Revolution and Instability

Rebel (verb)	When someone <b>rebels</b> , they start to behave differently from other people and reject the values of society or of their parents.	I was very young and <b>rebellng</b> against everything.
Comply with (verb)	If someone or something <b>complies with</b> an order or set of rules, they are in accordance with what is required or expected.	The commander said that the army would <b>comply with</b> the agreement.

### American Revolution

At the beginning of William Blake's lifetime, many countries were ruled by Britain. This was because British people had sailed to them and said that they had found them and now ruled them. British people then stayed in these countries to make profit "for the King". However, after many years, people – for example Americans – who had lived abroad and built cities and towns in other countries started to ask themselves: "why are we paying tax to Britain when we have not lived there for years? Are we really British any more?"

Over a long period of time, more people began to ask themselves these questions, and eventually they decided to rebel against Britain – to refuse to pay or to answer to the British government and King. This led to the American Revolution which happened between 1765 and 1783. There were many violent battles between the Americans and the British but, in the end, the Americans won independence and created their own constitution of laws that was separate from Britain's. This was a significant issue for Britain because it made them look weak and meant that they could no longer receive money in taxes from America. Blake was happy that America had freed itself.

### French Revolution

In 1789, French people also began to feel uneasy and began to ask themselves whether they were truly independent. France was not ruled by Britain – it had a monarchy of its own and many very rich families. The gap between rich and poor was huge and it was the poor majority who decided that the country needed freedom from hierarchy. They overthrew the monarchy and established a republic, meaning that the people could rule themselves democratically. The violent and bloody French Revolution included the guillotining (beheading) of the French aristocracy (the rich and powerful families), as well as the royals. This lasted from 1789 until 1799. France is Britain's neighbouring country and so when the revolution happened, shockwaves went through all of British society. British people were already shocked by the American Revolution and now they were seeing another time of people challenging authority. Blake supported the French Revolution before it became so violent, wearing a bonnet rouge (a red hat) to show his support!

### British Monarchy in trouble

George III reigned from 1760 to 1820. During his reign, he was challenged by both revolutions but also by mental illness and by political difficulties in his own country. The King was accused by some critics of being overly controlling and not giving enough power to government. George believed passionately that America should stay under British rule and saw it as a national interest. The American war, its political aftermath and family anxieties placed great strain on George in the 1780s. He was mentally unfit to rule in the last decade of his reign and his eldest son took over.

### Knowledge Check: MCQs

<p>a) Blake supported both the French and American Revolutions because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He saw himself as radical spiritual thinker</li> <li>2. He thought that individuals should have freedom and institutions like Britain should not be controlling</li> <li>3. He thought that nations should have freedom and make their own strong governments</li> </ol>	<p>b) There was instability in Britain during Blake's lifetime because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blake and his friends had radical spiritual and political ideals</li> <li>2. Not only were there two revolutions but also King George's health was failing</li> <li>3. There was both revolution and conformity</li> <li>4. Although Blake supported revolution, he didn't support violence and bloodshed</li> </ol>
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The Echoing Green,

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789



## The Echoing Green,

*William Blake, Songs of Innocence, 1789*

1. The sun does arise,  
2. And make happy the skies;  
3. The merry bells ring  
4. To welcome the Spring;  
5. The skylark and thrush,  
6. The birds of the bush,  
7. Sing louder around  
8. To the bells' cheerful sound;  
9. While our sports shall be seen  
10. On the echoing Green.

11. Old John, with white hair,  
12. Does laugh away care,  
13. Sitting under the oak,  
14. Among the old folk.  
15. They laugh at our play,  
16. And soon they all say,  
17. "Such, such were the joys  
18. When we all — girls and boys —  
19. In our youth-time were seen  
20. On the echoing Green."

21. Till the little ones, weary,  
22. No more can be merry:  
23. The sun does descend,  
24. And our sports have an end.  
25. Round the laps of their mothers  
26. Many sisters and brothers,  
27. Like birds in their nest,  
28. Are ready for rest,  
29. And sport no more seen  
30. On the darkening green.

The Chimney-Sweeper,

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789



## The Chimney-Sweeper,

*William Blake, Songs of Innocence, 1789*

1. When my mother died I was very young,  
2. And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
3. Could scarcely cry “Weep! weep! weep! weep!”  
4. So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

5. There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,  
6. That curled like a lamb’s back, was shaved; so I said,  
7. “Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head’s bare,  
8. You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.”

9. And so he was quiet, and that very night,  
10. As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight! —  
11. That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,  
12. Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

13. And by came an angel, who had a bright key,  
14. And he opened the coffins, and let them all free;  
15. Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,  
16. And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

17. Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
18. They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;  
19. And the Angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,  
20. He’d have God for his father, and never want joy.

21. And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,  
22. And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
23. Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:  
24. So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

## Little Boy Lost,

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789



## Little Boy Found

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789



## The Little Boy Lost,

*William Blake, Songs of Innocence, 1789*

1. "Father, father, where are you going?
2. Oh do not walk so fast!
3. Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
4. Or else I shall be lost."
  
5. The night was dark, no father was there,
6. The child was wet with dew;
7. The mire was deep, and the child did weep,
8. And away the vapour flew.

## The Little Boy Found,

*William Blake, Songs of Innocence, 1789*

1. The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
2. Led by the wandering light,
3. Began to cry, but God, ever nigh,
4. Appeared like his father, in white.
  
5. He kissed the child, and by the hand led,
6. And to his mother brought,
7. Who in sorrow pale, through the lonely dale,
8. The little boy weeping sought.

Nurse's Song,

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789



## Nurse's Song,

*William Blake, Songs of Innocence, 1789*

1. When the voices of children are heard on the green,  
2. And laughing is heard on the hill,  
3. My heart is at rest within my breast,  
4. And everything else is still.  
5. "Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,  
6. And the dews of night arise;  
7. Come, come, leave off play, and let us away,  
8. Till the morning appears in the skies."

9. "No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,  
10. And we cannot go to sleep;  
11. Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,  
12. And the hills are all covered with sheep."  
13. "Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,  
14. And then go home to bed."  
15. The little ones leaped, and shouted, and laughed,  
16. And all the hills echoed.

Nurse's Song,

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794



## Nurse's Song,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. When voices of children are heard on the green,
2. And whisperings are in the dale,
3. The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
4. My face turns green and pale.
  
5. Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
6. And the dews of night arise;
7. Your spring and your day are wasted in play,
8. And your winter and night in disguise.

Earth's Answer,

William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794



## Earth's Answer,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. Earth raised up her head  
2. From the darkness dread and drear,  
3. Her light fled,  
4. Stony, dread,  
5. And her locks covered with grey despair.

6. "Prisoned on watery shore,  
7. Starry jealousy does keep my den  
8. Cold and hoar;  
9. Weeping o're,  
10. I hear the father of the ancient men.

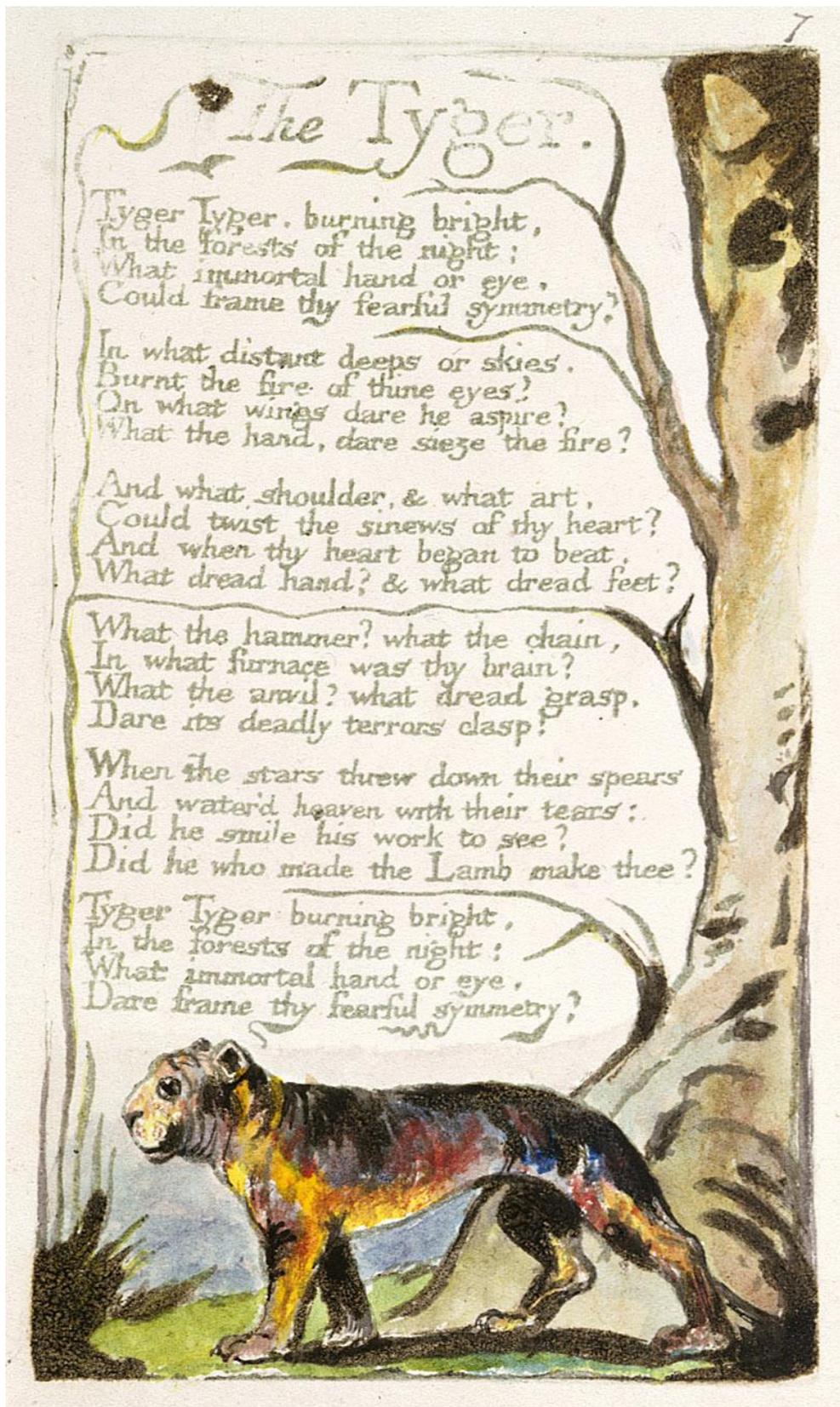
11. "Selfish father of men!  
12. Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!  
13. Can delight,  
14. Chained in night,  
15. The virgins of youth and morning bear?

16. "Does spring hide its joy,  
17. When buds and blossoms grow?  
18. Does the sower  
19. Sow by night,  
20. Or the plowman in darkness plough?

21. "Break this heavy chain,  
22. That does freeze my bones around!  
23. Selfish, vain,  
24. Eternal bane,  
25. That free love with bondage bound."

The Tyger,

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794



## The Tyger,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
2. In the forests of the night;
3. What immortal hand or eye,
4. Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
  
5. In what distant deeps or skies.
6. Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
7. On what wings dare he aspire?
8. What the hand, dare seize the fire?
  
9. And what shoulder, & what art,
10. Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
11. And when thy heart began to beat,
12. What dread hand? & what dread feet?
  
13. What the hammer? what the chain,
14. In what furnace was thy brain?
15. What the anvil? what dread grasp,
16. Dare its deadly terrors clasp!
  
17. When the stars threw down their spears
18. And water'd heaven with their tears:
19. Did he smile his work to see?
20. Did he who made the Lamb make thee?
  
21. Tyger Tyger burning bright,
22. In the forests of the night:
23. What immortal hand or eye,
24. Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

A Poison Tree,

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794



# A POISON TREE.

I was angry with my friend :  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe :  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,  
Night & morning with my tears :  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine,  
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,  
When the night had veild the pole :  
In the morning glad I see :  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

## A Poison Tree,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. I was angry with my friend;
2. I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
3. I was angry with my foe:
4. I told it not, my wrath did grow.
  
5. And I waterd it in fears,
6. Night & morning with my tears:
7. And I sunned it with smiles,
8. And with soft deceitful wiles.
  
9. And it grew both day and night.
10. Till it bore an apple bright.
11. And my foe beheld it shine,
12. And he knew that it was mine.
  
13. And into my garden stole,
14. When the night had veild the pole;
15. In the morning glad I see;
16. My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

The Sick Rose,

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794



## The Sick Rose,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. O Rose thou art sick.
2. The invisible worm,
3. That flies in the night
4. In the howling storm:
  
5. Has found out thy bed
6. Of crimson joy:
7. And his dark secret love
8. Does thy life destroy.

# The Chimney Sweeper

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794

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## The Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow:  
Crying weep, weep, in notes of woe!  
Where are thy father & mother? say?  
They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,  
And smil'd among the winters snow:  
They clothed me in the clothes of death,  
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, & dance & sing,  
They think they have done me no injury:  
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King,  
Who make up a heaven of our misery.



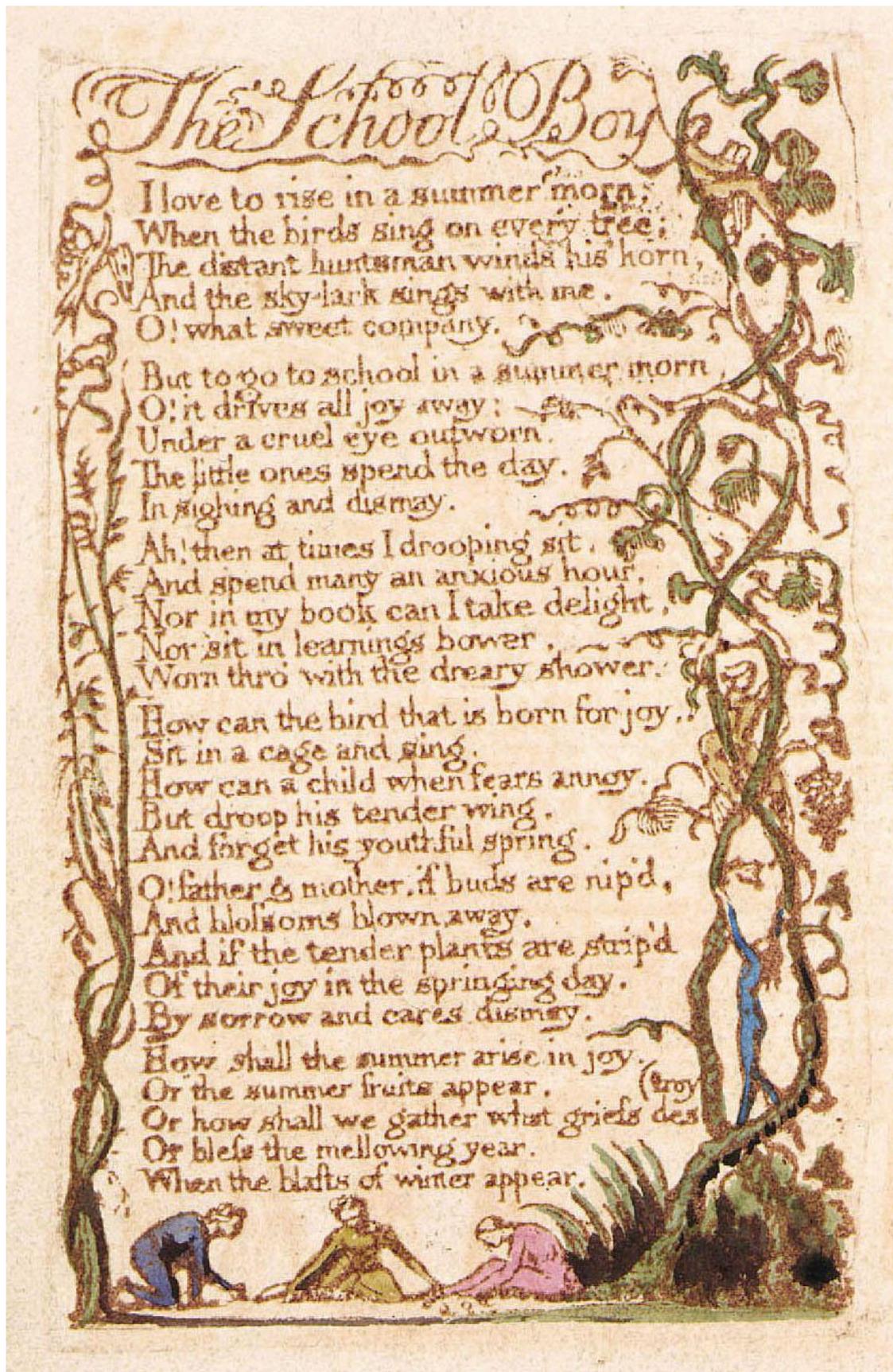
## The Chimney Sweeper

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. A little black thing among the snow,
2. Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe!
3. "Where are thy father and mother? say?"
4. "They are both gone up to the church to pray.
  
5. Because I was happy upon the heath,
6. And smil'd among the winter's snow,
7. They clothed me in the clothes of death,
8. And taught me to sing the notes of woe.
  
9. And because I am happy and dance and sing,
10. They think they have done me no injury,
11. And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King,
12. Who make up a heaven of our misery."

The Schoolboy,

William Blake, *Songs of Experience*, 1794



## The Schoolboy,

*William Blake, Songs of Experience, 1794*

1. I love to rise on a summer morn,
2. When birds are singing on every tree;
3. The distant huntsman winds his horn,
4. And the skylark sings with me:
5. Oh what sweet company!
  
6. But to go to school in a summer morn, —
7. Oh it drives all joy away!
8. Under a cruel eye outworn,
9. The little ones spend the day
10. In sighing and dismay.
  
11. Ah then at times I drooping sit,
12. And spend many an anxious hour;
13. Nor in my book can I take delight,
14. Nor sit in learning's bower,
15. Worn through with the dreary shower.
  
16. How can the bird that is born for joy
17. Sit in a cage and sing?
18. How can a child, when fears annoy,
19. But droop his tender wing,
20. And forget his youthful spring?
  
21. Oh father and mother, if buds are nipped,
22. And blossoms blown away;
23. And if the tender plants are stripped
24. Of their joy in the springing day,
25. By sorrow and care's dismay, —
  
26. How shall the summer arise in joy,
27. Or the summer fruits appear?
28. Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
29. Or bless the mellowing year,
30. When the blasts of winter appear?

The Echoing Green Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) <b>“Old John, with white hair, does laugh away care”.</b> In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. John laughs because he does not care about the children</li> <li>2. John takes care of the children playing on the green</li> <li>3. John laughs away all his worries while the children play</li> </ol>	<p>b) <b>“Such, such were the joys when we all – girls and boys – in our youth-time were seen on the echoing green.”</b> In other words...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The watching adults are nostalgic for the freedom of childhood</li> <li>2. The watching adults are still seen playing on the green</li> <li>3. The watching adults are angry at the children for their laughter</li> </ol>
<p>c) <b>“The sun does descend, and our sports have an end”.</b> In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The games continue long after dark</li> <li>2. The games, like the innocence of childhood, cannot last forever</li> <li>3. The games, like memory, grows darker and darker as time goes by</li> </ol>	<p>d) <b>The poem ends with an image of “the darkening green”</b> because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blake wants to remind children not to play outdoors in the dark</li> <li>2. Blake wants to remind the reader that darkness is something we should all be inspired by</li> <li>3. Blake wants to remind the reader that innocence will always end</li> </ol>

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Innocence) Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) <b>Blake himself had visions of angels. In this poem, Tom Dacre sees in his dream...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An angel who locks up the chimney sweepers with a “bright key”</li> <li>2. An angel who visits the speaker of the poem</li> <li>3. An angel who frees the chimney sweepers from their coffins</li> </ol>	<p>b) <b>“If he’d be a good boy, he’d... never want joy.”</b> In other words...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If Tom behaves well and conforms, he’ll always need joy in his life</li> <li>2. If Tom behaves well and conforms, he’ll never need to ask for joy because he’ll always have it</li> <li>3. If Tom behaves well and conforms, he can ask for joy any time he likes</li> </ol>
<p>c) <b>“If all do their duty, they need not fear harm”.</b> In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone must follow the rules and systems to avoid pain</li> <li>2. Everyone must challenge the rules and systems to avoid pain</li> <li>3. Everyone must question the rules and systems to avoid pain for others</li> </ol>	<p>d) <b>Although the poem seems to be arguing that conforming brings salvation, perhaps...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The poem is nostalgic for a simpler time of moral rules and systems</li> <li>2. Blake is actually mocking this obsessive focus on obedience and conformity</li> <li>3. Blake is in fact promoting the institution of the Church</li> </ol>

The Little Boy Lost + The Little Boy Found Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) <b>In The Little Boy Lost, we see a child chasing after a “vapour”, mistaking it for his father. In other words,...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The child pursues God</li> <li>2. The child is chasing after the wrong thing</li> <li>3. The child is walking quickly</li> </ol>	<p>b) <b>“The mire was deep, and the child did weep”.</b> Here, Blake means that...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The feeling of being spiritually lost is desolate and terrible</li> <li>2. The feeling of a mire is very muddy</li> <li>3. The feeling of weeping must always be avoided for children</li> </ol>
<p>c) <b>In The Little Boy Found, God appeared in the form of,...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The boy’s father, who leads him to his mother</li> <li>2. The boy’s father, who leads him through the lonely dale</li> <li>3. The boy’s father, who leads him into the fen</li> </ol>	<p>d) <b>“God, ever nigh, appeared like his father, in white. He kissed the child, and by the hand led.”</b> Here, Blake means that...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God can appear to us in a vision so we should be ready</li> <li>2. God is a guide and a salvation and can save us when we are lost</li> <li>3. God is a father to everyone and wears white</li> </ol>

**Nurse's Song (Songs of Innocence) Knowledge Check: MCQs**

**a) In the opening lines of Nurse's song, we hear how...**

1. The hill and the green are peaceful, silent places
2. Nature is idyllic and pure but adults are discontent
3. The innocence and laughter of children brings their nurse contentment

**b) When "the sun is gone down", the nurse...**

1. Demands aggressively that the children come inside
2. Tells the children to come inside and reminds them they can play in the morning
3. Tells the children they can't sleep because the birds are flying in the sky

**c) Like in The Echoing Green, the sun setting could be a metaphor for...**

1. The end of childhood, which, like a sunset, is inevitable and can't be escaped
2. The death of the speaker, which, like a sunset, is inevitable and can't be escaped
3. The death of oppressive institutions, which, like a sunset, is inevitable and can't be escaped

**d) Unlike the nurse, the children do not...**

1. Want to stop playing because they love the little sheep
2. Hear the echoing hills
3. Seem to notice the coming night; they are not aware that their innocence must end

**Nurse's Song (Songs of Experience) Knowledge Check: MCQs**

**a) In the first stanza of Nurse's song, we hear how...**

1. The nurse is disguised because she wants to conceal her anger
2. Whispering is spreading across the land and infecting the joy of childhood
3. The innocence and laughter of children brings their nurse discontent

**b) The nurse's "face turns green and pale" because...**

1. The sounds of children remind her that the day is getting late and the children must come in from playing
2. The sounds of children remind her of her childhood, which makes her feel both jealous and angry that the days of childhood are behind her
3. The sounds of children remind her of her own childhood, which seems like a long time ago and causes her to have sympathy for the children

**c) The Nurse thinks that children's "winter and night" is wasted in "disguise". This is a metaphor for...**

1. The way that, when children go to sleep, they are not themselves.
2. The way that, when children cannot play during the winter, they must turn to disguises
3. The way that adults waste their lives being deceitful and duplicitous, hiding their true selves

**d) By repeating lines from the Nurse's Song from Song of Innocence at the start of both stanzas, Blake...**

1. Subverts our expectations of the nurse's response to childhood innocence, making the corrupting power of adulthood seem more shocking
2. Confirms to our expectations of the nurse's response to childhood innocence, making the benevolent power of adulthood emphasised
3. Confirms our expectations of the nurse's response to childhood innocence, making the power of adulthood stronger

Earth's Answer Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) In the first stanza of Earth's Answer, Earth's "light fled" and "her locks covered with despair". In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is very dark weather and it is continuously night time on earth</li> <li>2. The Earth is a hopeless place, with no positivity or joy</li> <li>3. The Earth's forests are polluted and darkened</li> </ol>	<p>b) We hear Earth's voice, criticising God for being...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "cruel, jealous, selfish!"</li> <li>2. "stony, dread"</li> <li>3. "covered with grey despair"</li> <li>4. "dread and drear"</li> </ol>
<p>c) In the poem, we hear how Earth is "chained in night". In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is no light and therefore no happiness or joy in the world</li> <li>2. There is no light and therefore no one is able to see in the world</li> <li>3. There is no light and therefore no ability to make social or political progress</li> </ol>	<p>d) In the final stanza, Earth begs the reader to "break this heavy chain". In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are many people in prison on the Earth who shouldn't be</li> <li>2. The Earth is trapped and wants to be freed from sadness and misery, which is represented by "night"</li> <li>3. The joy of spring is trapping everyone who lives on the Earth</li> </ol>

The Tyger Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) The speaker wonders "what immortal hand or eye could frame thy fearful symmetry?". In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The speaker is wondering whether God created the tiger to make it symmetrical</li> <li>2. The speaker is curious about whether there is a God in the world because of the way animals are framed</li> <li>3. The speaker is questioning the qualities of a God who could have created something as perfectly frightening and intimidating as the tiger</li> </ol>	<p>b) In lines 13 – 16, the speaker questions which tools were used to make the tiger, making it clear that...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Because of the awesome and terrifying power of the tiger, it must have been made in fire and with powerful tools.</li> <li>2. Because of the tiger's strength, it must have been more powerful than a "hammer" and a "chain"</li> <li>3. Because of the tiger's roar, the "stars threw down their spears" in shock and awe</li> </ol>
<p>c) "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" In other words, the speaker is questioning...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether it is possible that God could have created the tiger in a "furnace" and with an "anvil"</li> <li>2. Whether it is possible that God could have abandoned the Lamb when he created the tiger</li> <li>3. Whether it is possible that God could create both a gentle, vulnerable, innocent lamb and a terrifying tiger</li> </ol>	<p>d) Overall, the poem encourages the reader to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand that it is impossible that God could exist because God created the evil tiger</li> <li>2. Understand that both good and evil exist and we can't always understand why God created the world in this way</li> <li>3. Understand that God definitely does exist because he used the "hammer" to create all living things</li> </ol>

A Poison Tree Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) In stanza one, the speaker expressed his anger at his friend but _____ his anger at his foe or enemy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oppressed</li> <li>2. Impressed</li> <li>3. Expressed</li> <li>4. Repressed</li> </ol>	<p>b) In stanza two, the speaker “watered” his wrath in “fears” and “tears” and “sunned” it with “smiles” and “deceitful wiles”. In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. His wrath is increased with water and sun, which nourish it like a tree and cause it to grow</li> <li>2. Being afraid to address the issue, sadness, a façade of friendliness, and duplicity nourish the wrath and make it increase and grow</li> <li>3. The speaker’s “fear” of repression and his “tears” about his friend make the anger he felt increase greatly</li> </ol>
<p>c) Despite his attempts to hide his wrath, eventually it “bore an apple bright” and his “foe” saw it “shine and he knew that it was mine”. In other words, although...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You can try to hide your true feelings, they will always eventually be exposed and noticed by others</li> <li>2. He tried to nourish and water the wrath he felt, it will always bear a fruit that is visible to others</li> <li>3. You might try to bear the wrath you feel but it must be expressed in the form of an “apple bright”</li> </ol>	<p>d) At the end of the poem, the foe “stole” into the speaker’s garden in the dead of night, ate the apple and was discovered by the “glad” speaker “in the morning” “outstretched beneath the tree”. In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The poison of wrath has corrupted the innocence of not only the “foe” but also the speaker because they both nourished the tree</li> <li>2. The poison of wrath not only destroyed the speaker’s enemy but also the speaker’s morality because he was “glad” at his foe’s destruction</li> <li>3. The poison of wrath has not only spread the disease of duplicity across the land, it has also literally caused death</li> </ol>

The Sick Rose Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) The worm is “invisible” because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is hidden by the “crimson” petals of the rose</li> <li>2. It is hidden by the darkness of night</li> <li>3. It is obliterated by the “sick[ness]” of the rose</li> <li>4. It is too small to see</li> </ol>	<p>b) The worm “does thy life destroy” with his “dark secret love”. In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The worm’s secretive qualities are what kill the rose</li> <li>2. The worm’s concealed closeness to the flower destroys it</li> <li>3. The worm has a “crimson joy” that ultimately kills the rose</li> </ol>
<p>c) The rose could represent either nature or love. If the rose represents nature, the poem is a metaphor for...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The way in which corruption of nature is a positive consequence of the Industrial Revolution</li> <li>2. The temporary nature of love and its fragility when faced by attacks from foes</li> <li>3. The ephemeral and fragile “joy” of nature; it can easily be corrupted and is never permanent</li> </ol>	<p>d) The rose could represent either nature or love. If the rose represents love, the poem is a metaphor for...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The inevitable destruction of the natural world</li> <li>2. The inevitable corruption of the purity of romance and love</li> <li>3. The inevitable strength of love against attack by all foes</li> </ol>

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Experience) Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) In Songs of Innocence, the Chimney Sweeper describes Tom Dacre who is visited by angels and taught that “if all do their ____, they need not fear ____”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. rebellion / conformity</li> <li>2. work / subversion</li> <li>3. duty / harm</li> <li>4. role / pain</li> </ol>	<p>b) In Songs of Experience, the Chimney Sweeper has been abandoned in the snow by his parents, who are in the church praying, because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They are religious and devoted to attending church</li> <li>2. They hate his “clothes of death” and his “notes of woe”</li> <li>3. They are punishing him for being “happy upon the heath” and enjoying the snow</li> </ol>
<p>c) The child of experience in the Chimney Sweeper keeps his façade of happiness, dancing and singing but is “in the clothes of death” and full of “woe” and blames “God and his Priest and King who make up a heaven of our misery”. In other words...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The church and the monarchy are both to blame for children’s pain and the corruption of their innocence and benefit from it</li> <li>2. The boy’s parents are to blame for leaving him “among the snow” because they are both selfish and religious</li> <li>3. God and the King have entrapped children because they believe in the “heaven of misery” that is created by children being “happy”</li> </ol>	<p>d) Whereas the innocent Chimney Sweeper in Songs of Innocence simply accepted the message of conformity, the child of experience in this poem is instead...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aware that his pain is caused by the injustice in society and blames institutions such as the church and monarchy</li> <li>2. Abandoned by his parents in the snow, crying with “woe”</li> <li>3. Rebellious and vocal in his support of the Industrial Revolution</li> </ol>

The Schoolboy Knowledge Check: MCQs	
<p>a) The poem opens with a feeling of joy, freedom and connection with nature because...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blake wants to remind the readers to enjoy the outdoors and “rise on a summer morn”</li> <li>2. Blake wants to promote the “birds singing on every tree” as an important part of society</li> <li>3. Blake wants to emphasise the importance of nature, individual freedom and the preservation of the innocence of children</li> </ol>	<p>b) In lines 13-15, Blake reveals that, because of the “anxious hours” of school “in sighing and dismay”, the school boy can no longer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “take delight” in reading or be comforted by learning</li> <li>2. become “worn through with dreary shower”</li> <li>3. “drooping sit” relaxing in the comfort of his home</li> </ol>
<p>c) Blake compares children at school to caged birds when he wonders “how can a bird that is born for joy sit in a cage and sing?” In other words,...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children are like birds because they are caged indoors and never allowed to experience nature</li> <li>2. Children are naturally hard working and determined and so school is not necessary</li> <li>3. Children are naturally free, innocent and joyful and school is unnatural because it stops them from being able to express themselves</li> </ol>	<p>d) “If buds are nipped and blossoms blown away”, a plant cannot bear “summer fruits” or cope with “blasts of winter”. This metaphor reveals that...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If joy is cruelly taken away from children, they will not be able have a happy future or to cope with difficulties</li> <li>2. If children are attacked and “blown away”, they will not ripen like a fruit and will be left in the snow like the Chimney Sweeper</li> <li>3. If children are abused by their parents and teachers, they will wither away and die in the winter</li> </ol>

