

Knowledge Organiser: Poetry of Injustice

Poet: Poem	Writer’s Intent	Key Idea	Explanation		Where it’s seen in the texts	
Niyi Osundare ‘Not My Business’	To demonstrate how ignorance towards injustice creates further suffering .	Injustice	A lack of fairness or justice.		All the poems studied in this module reflect different types of injustice; focusing predominantly on face.	
Tatamkhulu Afrika ‘Nothing’s Changed’	To reveal the experiences of Apartheid and anger towards racism .	Persecution	Hostility and ill-treatment , especially because of race or political or religious beliefs; oppression.		Persecution is seen in ‘Not My Business’ and ‘Nothing’s Changed’.	
		Oppression	Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.		Oppression is seen throughout ‘I Look at the World’ and ‘Caged Bird’.	
Maya Angelou ‘I know why the caged bird sings’	To reflect the discrimination and inequality faced by Afro-Americans .	Prejudice	An unfair opinion , especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge .		Prejudice is explored in ‘Caged Bird’ and ‘Nothing’s Changed’.	
		Identity	The characteristics that determine who a person is .		Identity is explored in ‘In My Country’ and ‘Nothing’s Changed’.	
		Writer’s Methods				
		Method	Definition	Example	Purpose	
Langston Hughes ‘I Look at the World’	To condemn oppressive forces and initiate action against injustice.	Juxtaposition	Two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect .		Seen in ‘Caged Bird’	To allow the reader to effectively compare two ideas.
		Metaphor	Describing something by saying it is something else .		‘the caged bird’	To provide a new way of looking at an idea – a powerful form of visual communication.
Adrienne Rich ‘What Kind of Times Are These’	To oppose societal silence on injustice and encourage creating solutions for the modern world.	Refrain	Line or lines repeated at intervals throughout a poem, usually at the end of the stanza		‘what business of mine is it’	To reinforce the overall message of the poem.
		Rhyme Scheme	The pattern of rhymes at the end of each line of a poem.		Seen in ‘I Look at the World’	The regularity of the rhyme scheme creates pace and keeps the reader connected.
Jackie Kay ‘In My Country’	To explore the effect of racial prejudice and the impact it has on identity .	Free-verse	Poetry that does not rhyme or have a regular rhythm.		Seen in ‘What Kind of Times are These’	To provide freedom over meaning and create more poetic expression.
		Tone	The general character or attitude of a place , piece of writing, situation		Seen in ‘Nothing’s Changed’	This sets the mood for the reader and allows them to understand the speaker.



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Key Word Glossary			
Word	Definition	Example	Word in Action
Semantic Field	A set of related words that can be placed into one category.	There is a semantic field of nature in 'In My Country' – 'waters', 'river', 'sea'	
Imagery	Visually descriptive language.	Kay creates vivid imagery for 'In My Country' to demonstrate her feelings towards being prejudiced.	
Personification	Attributing human characteristics onto non-human objects.	The use of personification in 'Not My Business' creates an emotive effect, and deepens the reader's understanding.	
Emotive Language	Language that evokes an emotional response in the reader.	In 'Nothing's Changed' the poet conveys tragedy through their use of emotive language.	
Confinement	A situation in which a person is kept somewhere, usually by force.	'I know why the caged bird sings' explores ideas about confinement.	
Freedom	The right to be able or allowed to do, say, think whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited.	'I know why the caged bird sings' is a poem about freedom.	
Anaphora	The repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of lines.	Osundare uses anaphora in 'Not My Business' to make the poem seem more direct; add a sense of bluntness.	
Alliteration	The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words.	In 'Nothing's Changed' alliteration is used to distinguish the physical changes from societal changes.	
Enjambment	The continuation of a line onto the next without interruption.	The use of enjambment in 'Nothing's Changed' effects the pacing of the poem, and makes it seem increasingly urgent.	
Apartheid	A system of racial segregation (separateness).	'Nothing's Changed' features context related to apartheid, and teaches the reader about the consequences of prejudice.	
Liberation	The action of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression.	'I Look at the World' explores finding liberation within yourself in order to then liberate those who are oppressed.	
Allusion	Calling something to mind without directly mentioning it; an indirect reference.	The allusion in 'What Kind of Times are These' requires readers to know about Brecht's original poem.	
Rhetorical Question	A question asked to create a dramatic effect or to make a point rather than get an answer.	The rhetorical question in 'What Kind of Times are These' reflects Rich's political agenda.	