

Toast

- by Sheenagh Pugh -

Background information

For background information on the Millennium Stadium, see the following websites:

<http://www.millenniumstadium.com/history/index.php>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Stadium

Activities

A

The aim of this activity is to help learners appreciate the choices a poet makes. Once the poem is complete on the page, the choices may seem inevitable. Learners should be asked to justify their choice in each case, and discuss how this word choice contributes to the impact of the poem.

B

The two meanings of 'toast' (see Glossary) neatly sum up two aspects: the builders sunbathing and the reaction 'the judgment of passing eyes'.

C

The key here is for learners to consider how far the register chosen matches the content and context. The use of slang and colloquial language may be seen as suitable for the setting and the interactions in that setting.

D

Responses which identify grammatical terminology accurately are obviously more impressive than those which are less precise. Here the word class is already a given: the next step is to articulate clearly what these words contribute to the meaning and impact of the poem.

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E

Again, naming the parts is not the end point. However, if they can name the parts and go on to explore the effect these devices have, significant progress in the appreciation of poems may be made.

In the last two stanzas, the colloquial 'look... like' means 'to seem probable'. Personification has a stronger claim than simile here.

F and G

The first nine stanzas are set at the time the stadium is being built. The last six stanzas are the present moment for the poet when writing the poem. In many ways the negatives in this second section are not confirmed: 'but' and 'more like' introduce qualifications which effectively undermine any negative impact.

H

The intonation and expression a poet uses in 'performing' their own poems may give an insight into various aspects of the poem. In addition, any answers to questions may contribute to learners' overall understanding of the craft of poetry.