

VICTORIAN POETRY WITH DR SIMON RENNIE

TALKING POINTS

- 1) What was the Lancashire Cotton Famine and in which years did it take place? (See the very start of the article)
- 2) What issues is Simon's work trying to address? (See *Why is it important to increase public knowledge of the Lancashire Cotton Famine*)
- 3) How many people were affected by the Lancashire Cotton Famine? (See *Why is it important to increase public knowledge of the Lancashire Cotton Famine*)
- 4) Who were the largest publishers of poetry in the nineteenth century? (See *How were the poems 're-found' after ~150 years?*)
- 5) What is Victorian poetry? (See *About Victorian Poetry*)
- 6) How might we encourage more men to study English? (See *About Victorian Poetry*)
- 7) What can society learn from Simon's research? (See *About Victorian Poetry*)

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

TAKE A LOOK AT THE POETRY OF THE LANCASHIRE COTTON FAMINE DATABASE AND PERFORM THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

1. Select a poem at random and read it. Are there any words written in local dialect or language that you don't understand? Can you find what those words mean from other sources?
2. Select a different poem at random and read it aloud. Does the dialect or archaic Victorian language affect the rhythm of the poetry? Is anything gained by reading the poems aloud?
3. Select another poem at random and read it. Now rewrite the poem using the language of today. Is anything lost by doing this?

SAY IT WITH COLOUR

Poetry is a fantastic way to express your feelings, and what better way to do that than to write a poem about a colour. First, write down as many words as you can that you associate with a colour. For example, yellow might make you think of sunny days. Young Writers suggests you use analogies, metaphors, similes and nouns. Imagine what your colour tastes, feels, sounds and looks like. And write all of these words down. Now that you have a page full of words, you're ready to put them together and create your poem.

Young Writers has this example:

White is a fresh start, a clean slate

It is the silence of an empty room where you have to wait...

Young Writers has lots of activities such as this one, as well as competitions and prizes. Check out their website at: www.youngwriters.co.uk