Man, nature and the city

Lesson 3 – William Blake, ‘London’ (Wider Contexts, p. 214)

## Last time: ‘The ecchoing green

## Homework: Do the pre-reading exercises on p. 214 at home

# Groups of 3-4 according to the name of your oldest cousin

# Discussion

Discuss what you found out at home, and try to remember what you know about the industrial revolution (last time’s ppt)

# Vocabulary

Verse line (one line)

Stanza (a unit of lines)

Quatrain (a unit of 4 lines)

Sestet (a unit of 6 lines)

Octave (a unit of 8 lines)

# Sensory imagery

Language that creates images in the reader’s mind (but not the same as metaphors and similes).

* **Visual** imagery engages the sense of **sight**.
* **Gustatory** imagery engages the sense of **taste**.
* **Tactile** imagery engages the sense of **touch**.
* **Auditory** imagery engages the sense of **hearing**.
* **Olfactory** imagery engages the sense of **smell**.
* **Kinesthetic** imagery engages the feeling of **movement**. It deals with full-body sensations, such as those experienced during exercise. Rushing water, flapping wings, and pounding hearts are all examples of kinesthetic imagery.

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/sensory-imagery-in-creative-writing>

# Listen to the poem ‘London’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PI8UdEug3Eo>

**In class:** Is there a steady rhyme and metre?

# Analysis in groups

**Use the paper version of the poems and the boards. Check in with Rikke before you move on to the next question – and take a photo of your notes before you wipe the board.**

1. Take turns reading the whole poem (take a stanza or two each).
2. Find examples of a steady iambic (u -) and trochaic (- u) metre, and notice the most significant deviations from this foot. What is amplified when we see deviations from these metres?
3. Explain the meaning of each stanza. Check the meaning of the words you do not understand (glossary on p. 214 in the book). Ask Rikke for help when necessary – do not go online.
4. Interpret the metaphor ‘mind-forg’d manacles’.
5. What is the effect of using repetition in specific parts of the poem, e.g., stanza 1 and 2?
6. Explain how the speaker of the poem expresses the misery of London. Support your characterisation with quotes from the text, and include the effect of using sensory imagery.
7. What seems to be the speaker’s attitude to the different classes of society, e.g., the church, the King and the poor (including the harlot)?
8. How does the poem reflect the industrialisation of Britain?

## Critical statements (if time)

In groups.

a. Which comment/s do you find best match/es your view of the text? Try to reach an agreement.

1. Blake’s ‘London’ is a revolutionary document which ferociously attacks the corruption of urban life.
2. Despite the fury of the attack on the institutions of the time, Blake’s ‘London’ always retains its tone of compassion and suffering.
3. In ‘London’, we see a city which is truly a vision of hell – of life after the Fall.
4. In London’, Blake’s angry denunciation of social institutions never loses sight of the way an individual is enslaved by his or her own fear and brutality.

(All the statements are from Gillian Lazar, *Literature and Language Teaching.* CUP 1993.)