



# Indicative A response

## Poetry that speaks

Year 8

English

## Section 1. Poetry analysis

Respond to the following questions. They will be very helpful in assisting you to write your analytical essay.

1. What does Bromden mean when he says, "The temperature's rising, but there aren't any flames"?

*Without the usual reason for temperature increases, fire, the temperature of the earth is rising. The reason of course is global warming, which is mostly induced by human activity. The heat is coming from factories, cars, the greenhouse effect, etc. not flames like in a fire. This poem suggests that the causes are not natural processes of the earth but through human interference in the natural flow.*

2. Explain in what sense the word "complacently" is used in the poem. Try to work it out by looking at the words around it and the clues given in the text.

*In this poem, complacently means that people carry on their normal day to day activities without a care in the world for the natural environment. They ignore scientists' warnings about the future of the planet and continue polluting, wasting water and using resources far too quickly. They are complacent to the point of negligence and danger.*

3. In stanza two is the line "We all know that smoking will ruin our health". What is:

- a. the obvious meaning in the statement?

*Everyone knows that smoking is bad for us because of the effects it has on the respiratory and circulatory system as well as other functions in the body.*

- b. the deeper or less obvious meaning in the statement?

*He likens the tall billowing smoke stacks to huge cigarettes and asks if we know that smoking will kill us, why can we not see that the smoke stacks are killing our environment?*

4. In stanza three, what does Bromden mean by the "atmosphere oven"? Do you think this is a clever way to express this meaning? Explain.

*Again the "atmosphere oven" refers to global warming. In this sentence he has made a direct correlation between the greenhouse effect and global warming.*

5. Why would “greenies and businessmen” be “pushin’ and shovin’”?

*The greenies and businessmen are both trying to be heard. Many are in direct opposition. The businessmen, who think only of the profits that come at the expense of the environment, against the greenies, who want to shut down industries so the environment can recover from the damage that has already been done. Both want to be heard by government and the community. Both have a lot to gain and a lot to lose.*

6. Explain the effect that Bromden is trying to achieve in the similes in the last two lines in stanza three.

*“Like an extra blanket in an already warm bed”. This is a very powerful simile as it describes how human activity is responsible for heating something that is already as hot as it needs to be — it is being overheated which everyone knows is uncomfortable and eventually unbearable. It builds effective imagery in the mind of the reader because everyone knows what it is like to be too hot and because of his use of imagery, people can relate to what is happening to the earth.*

7. In stanza four, why does Bromden put the word “natural” in inverted commas?

*“Natural” in this sense is meant to be a sarcastic use of the word. There is nothing natural about the reasons for global warming. According to Bromden, the causes are all due to the behaviours of humans.*

8. In the last stanza, how could the stakes become even higher?

*The stakes could be much higher. Bromden’s use of words such as “crisis” and the “world is on fire” suggests that the earth will die and its inhabitants will perish with it.*

9. Identify the poetic devices or other techniques that Bromden uses to engage the reader and promote his message. How effective are they?

*He uses a number of poetic devices to enhance the meanings in the poem.*

*Examples:*

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Personification</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Society complacently spends and consumes”</li><li>• “As the atmosphere chokes”</li></ul>  |
| <i>Imagery</i>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Smokestacks billow like towering cigarettes” (also a simile)</li><li>• “Our land dries and cracks as our faces turn red”</li><li>• “The world is on fire”</li></ul> |
| <i>Similes</i>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Like an extra blanket on an already warm bed”</li><li>• “Smokestacks billow like towering cigarettes”</li></ul>   |
| <i>Metaphor</i>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Greenhouse gases fire the atmosphere oven”</li><li>• “But now the Antarctic’s all water and rock”</li></ul>   |

*These devices have been very effective as they reinforce the message that the poet is trying to convey. He wants his audience to know that the environmental problem we are facing is serious and that we are responsible for the mess we are in so we have a responsibility to do something about it. He makes people sound like monsters who scour the earth using up resources and causing damage wherever they go.*

10. Find the conjunctions (linking words) that are used to join ideas within the text. Write these words and the ideas that they link. Highlight the conjunction.

*A number of linking words have been used.*

- Line 1 — “The temperature’s rising but there aren’t any flames”
- Line 17 — “The issue is real and affects everyone”.

11. What adjective/noun combinations are used to enhance visual imagery? What images are being promoted and how effective are they?

“Scientist’s claims” — claims that are backed by intelligence and expertise must be right.

“leftover fumes” — makes the fumes sound dirtier and unworthy.

“melting ice-caps” — makes the reader feel the urgency of the situation.

“natural’ mishaps” — lets the reader know that although the problem is stated as being a natural phenomena, it is more than likely something human activity has caused. Blaming natural processes is a bit too easy and convenient.

“eco-tourism” — supposedly tourism that is not harmful to the environment but the poet doesn’t believe this point of view, citing the demise of Antarctica.

12. Words that express or create mood, feelings or tone are called emotive words. What emotive words are used here and how effective are they?

- Complacently — this word is effective because it makes the audience think that society doesn’t care about the effect of its overspending. It just carries on like it always has without regard for the environment.
- Billow — this word works well in this poem because it gives the impression of masses and masses of pollution being puffed out into the environment without care for the consequences.
- Pushin’ and shovin’ — the greenies and the businessmen are playing a game where they are constantly involved in trying to win a point over the other — like elbowing each other in a crowd to get ahead.
- Destroyed — a word about endings and death. In this poem it is about the death of habitats. The word is an emotive one with overtones of sadness and destruction.
- Real — “the issue is real and affects everyone” — it is not something that will go away. It is going to have catastrophic effects for all of us. It is effective in conveying meaning in this poem.
- Crisis — this affects the tone of this poem because it brings a serious and urgent note to the environmental dilemma that affects us now.

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13. What people or groups of people are likely to challenge, oppose or resist the message in the poem?

*People who are more likely to challenge, oppose or resist this message are those who have something to gain by not actively preserving the natural environment. The sort of people could be property developers who stand to make a lot of money by destroying natural habitats to make room for more houses, shops and factories; mining companies who stand to gain hundreds of millions of dollars by carrying out their mining activity or people who just don't care and can't be bothered helping by recycling or walking instead of driving.*

## Section 2. Analytical essay

**Gilbert Bromden has a point of view about the effect of human activities upon the natural environment. Many people agree with what he has to say in this poem.**

**Write an essay discussing how effective you think Bromden has been in getting his message across.**

Intro and  
setting  
the scene

*Gilbert Bromden is a man with firm ideas about the environment. His poem, "World on Fire", leaves his audience with no doubt that his opinion is that the human race must act now to save the natural environment or it will soon be too late.*

*He very firmly allocates blame for the sad state of the environment by saying that people ignore the warnings. He states that politicians find it easier to pretend that there are no environmental issues so that they don't have to make unpopular decisions that the public may object to.*

*Bromden effectively conveys his message through the clever use of poetic devices, a regular rhyme pattern and a powerful choice of vocabulary.*

*Some poetic devices he uses are similes, metaphors, imagery and personification. In using these devices, he enhances the meanings of the words he uses. He makes people sound like horrible monsters gobbling up everything in their paths. One device, personification, is used effectively in the line "Society complacently spends and consumes". It makes humans sound like they use whatever they want without regard for the environmental cost. Then he goes on to say that "the atmosphere chokes".*

*Bromden uses words to create powerful images in the minds of the readers which also add to the meaningfulness of his poem. "Smokestacks billow like towering cigarettes", also a simile, builds up powerful images of ugly polluting chimneys spewing poison into the air.*

*Bromden's use of emotive words such as "destroyed", a word about endings and death adds much depth to this poem making us feel lost and worried about the inevitable sadness and destruction.*

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Invitations are issued to the reader to accept what he says in the poem about the urgency of the environmental problem but there is also an understanding that there will be people who do not agree with this message. Politicians, John Howard in particular, have rejected the warnings. Others will also.

Bromden states that the reason for denying the environmental problem exists is about wealth. About not wanting to sacrifice an affluent lifestyle and income just to protect the trees, forests, animals, biomes, etc.

Conclusion { Concluding with a serious warning, the poet is very clear about what we face if we do not act to save the environment. Do something now, or have no future to look forward to.