

Metaphysical poetry: (a) An introduction

Use this sheet with Metaphysical poetry: (a)i Conceits and Metaphysical poetry: (a)ii Attitudes.

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- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To provide a general introduction to metaphysical poetry.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Print two sets of the cards from Metaphysical poetry: (a)i Conceits on different colour paper and cut out.
 - Students draw one card from each pile and try to make a comparison between the two.
 - This can be done instantly, or after giving one or two minutes thinking time. Points could be awarded for ingenuity.
 - Introduce the idea of the conceit.
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Look at the sheet of quotations — Metaphysical poetry: (a)ii Attitudes.
 - What sort of impression does this give you of the sort of poems you might expect to meet?
 - Students could write a list of their expectations of the poems, which they look at again after studying a number of poems, and see if their suggestions have been borne out.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Look up the word 'metaphysical'.
 - Try to combine the varying definitions you find into one which satisfies your understanding of what metaphysical poetry is like.
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Develop in writing one or two of the 'conceits' attempted in the opening exercise.
 - This does not have to be poetic in form.
- ❖ **Critical task:** Later in your study, return to the sheet of quotations and use one or two of the quotations as the discussion topic of an essay.
- ❖ **Extension task:** Find examples of modern day verbal wit.
 - What kind of things do we find funny/clever nowadays?
 - Witty comments could be collected and added to a display, or a suitable TV or radio programme could be analysed.