



# Pearson

April 2016

Dear Head of English

**Re: Information on 'Poems of the Decade' for AS and A level English Literature (2015 specification)**

I hope your preparations for the forthcoming first sitting of the 2015 AS in English Literature are going well.

I wanted to briefly draw your attention to the different versions of 4 of the 28 poems that your students have studied in the two versions of 'Poems of the Decade' which may be in circulation.

The 2 versions of the set text are the 'grey' 9780571281732 (older) and the 'vase' 9780571325405 (new) editions. Faber updated the anthology between its inclusion in the specification and first teaching in September 2015.

I am alerting you to these differences in case of the unlikely eventuality that your students have studied the poems using the grey version but have a clean vase version for use during their exam. In the table below, you will find details of the minor differences in the 4 poems between the grey and vase editions.

**This situation is likely to affect a tiny number of students sitting the AS exams. Please ignore this message if you have only ever used the 'vase' edition of the text in your teaching.**

The page numbers for poems in both versions will be provided in the AS exam. This is demonstrated on p. 3 of the AS [specimen paper](#). Students are instructed to consider a named poem and to choose a further poem from the other 27 studied using the list of poems (with page numbering) in the question paper. In answering the question, students will consult their own edition of 'Poems of the Decade'.

**Differences between the 'grey' 9780571281732 (older) and 'vase' 9780571325405 (new) editions**

	Poem	Difference
1.	Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass – Simon Armitage (p.6 vase, p.16 grey)	In the grey edition 'count back across time/ to what grass never knew to forget' is 'to work back through its man-made dreams,/to try to forget' in the vase edition (last stanza).
2.	A Leisure Centre Is Also a Temple of Learning – Sue Boyle (p.23 vase, p.33 grey)	In the grey edition 'her breasts mound as though sculptured from sand by a warm wind' (line 7). This line is omitted in the vase edition so that in the grey edition the second stanza has 3 lines, whereas the vase edition has 2.

		<p>The grey edition has 8 stanzas whilst the vase edition has 7.</p> <p>In the grey edition the fourth stanza reads:</p> <p>‘Her head tilted like a listening bird</p> <p>She brushes her hair so whistle clean it is like a waterfall.’</p> <p>In the vase edition the ‘listening bird’ line is omitted and the third stanza ends with ‘She brushes her hair so clean it looks like a waterfall.’</p>
3.	Giuseppe – Roderick Ford (p.66 vase, p.76 grey)	5 stanzas in the grey edition. 6 stanzas in the vase edition (the last stanza of the grey edition is split in the vase edition).
4.	The Fox in the National Museum of Wales – Robert Minhinnick (p.121 vase, p.131 grey)	A number of items are capitalised in the vase edition that are lower case in the grey edition. ‘Brugmansia’ (stanza 9) is italicised in the vase edition but not in the grey edition.

I would like to reassure you that students may write about whichever version (the grey or the vase) of these 4 poems they have studied.

**Examiners will be fully briefed about the differences between the versions and will be ready to accept responses to either.** It is common for writers, especially poets, to publish different versions of their works and considering the differences between versions can be a rich source of discussion for students. Examiners are used to dealing with more than one version of a set text as this is something which occurs frequently when examining on English qualifications over the lifetime of the specification.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at [teachingenglish@pearson.com](mailto:teachingenglish@pearson.com).

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your students the very best of luck in their forthcoming exams.

Yours faithfully

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