

John Donne



*2008 Leaving Cert Question*



# The Question

- ❖ John Donne uses startling imagery and wit in his exploration of relationships.
- ❖ Give your response to the poetry of John Donne in the light of this statement.  
Support your points with the aid of suitable reference to the poems you have studied.



# The Marking Scheme

- ❖ Reward responses that show clear evidence of personal engagement/involvement with the poetry of John Donne. Expect discussion (though not necessarily equal) of Donne's effective use of both imagery and wit in exploring relationships.
- ❖ Code DI/R for Donne's use of imagery in exploring relationships. Code DW/R for Donne's use of wit in exploring relationships.
- ❖ Material might be drawn from the following:
  - ❖ - metaphysical wit/ingenuity – paradoxes, puns, conceits, etc. in his religious/love poetry
  - ❖ - wide-ranging imagery – religious, sensual, natural, etc.
  - ❖ - unexpected/daring images used to explore his relationship with God
  - ❖ - witty arguments exploring relationships
  - ❖ - drama, power and freshness of Donne's language in elucidating relationships Etc.



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# Approaching the Essay

- ❖ Introduction should address the question
- ❖ Do not say 'I agree with this statement'
- ❖ Outline your thesis (eg. Donne explores relationships between men and women and between man and God. He does so in a way... Etc.)

- ❖ You may wish to discuss the poems you will use in your answer, but work them into your thesis statement: 'Whether it is Donne's playful celebration of sexual love in "The Flea" or his devout plea to God in "Batter my heart", the imagery remains...'



# Student's Introduction

- ❖ Although John Donne's poetry is four hundred years old, its startling imagery and wit provides it with an enduring quality that continues to fascinate readers today. Donne's exploration of relationships encompasses romantic relationships as well as his relationship with God. Indeed in some poems, there is an overlap in terms of language and imagery between physical and spiritual relationships. The essay begins by examining Donne's imagery and wit in his personal poems and leads to the more religiously-themed poems selected from his Holy Sonnets.



# Student's Introduction

- ❖ John Donne uses poetry to explore his own identity, express his feelings, and most of all, he uses it to deal with the personal experiences occurring in his life. Donne's poetry is a confrontation or struggle to find a place in this world, or rather, a role to play in a society from which he often finds himself detached or withdrawn. This essay will discuss Donne's states of mind, his views on love, women, religion, his relationship with God; and finally how the use of poetic form plays a part in his exploration for an identity and salvation.