Mid Stage 4 English – Selecting and Analysing Poems for an Anthology – Grade B

“How Gilbert Died” by Banjo Patterson, “How McDougal topped the score” by Thomas E. Spencer and “The killer” by Judith Wright are just three of the many poems I would suggest for an 7 anthology.

“How Gilbert died” tells the adventure and death of an outlaw. It has a strong rhyming pattern of ABABAB. Banjo Patterson has used different techniques to convey different feelings.

For instance, in the first stanza, the poet writes, “stock in the grave made tread, unnoticed and unspoken.” This gives a feeling that no one knew of his death. However, the lines after clearly state that “the smallest child on the watershed can tell you how Gilbert died.” The reader might feel shocked or even disgusted as everyone knew of his death but didn’t care.

Similes and Metaphors, such as, “who tracked like a human hound” and “who were their prey from sleep,” give the impression that Gilbert and his partner, Dunn, were like animals to their following troopers.

The poet uses personification to help the reader understand what the feelings and sounds were like, such as “roar roar” and “bullets crash.” Words like “life flashed through darkness” make you feel staggered and spun.
The way Banjo Patterson repeats the first stanza at the end of the poem is very effective and it dawns on the reader the meaning of the whole poem. Personally, I believe it was a great ‘tactic’ revealing everything at the last minute!

‘How McDougal topped the score’ by Thomas E. Spencer is a humorous poem which most, if not all, students will love. This poem has the classic rhyming pattern - AABBAAB... The poet effectively uses similes such as “like the grass before the scythe... our wickets tumbled down” makes it seem as if all is lost and shows the emotions whilst “screed the ball like lightning” gives the reader a picture of something moving at top speed (zoom...)

Throughout the poem, two points of view are shown. For instance, “McDougal pulled; Molongos severe” and “McDougal kept on running as Molongos chased the dig!”

The last line of the poem has a great effect on the reader and you can almost imagine the men cheering (hoorah!).
"The killer" by Judith Wright has a title that captures your eye. The poem mainly appeals to the sense of sight. For example, you can imagine a day “as clear as fire” or a “black horse sprung from the dark.”

From the first line of the 3rd stanza, the reader would probably make the assumption that the “black horse” is “the killer.” However, in the very next stanza, the poet seems somewhat stronger than whatever came through the long reeds.

“Eye glare” and “clear and dead” etc. put pictures in the reader’s minds and they suddenly realise the poet is “the killer.”

I believe this poem is eye-opening and makes people understand.

These poems, really, are good reads and I hope yr 7 think so too!

Grade Commentary

Flynn has demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the selected poems. The response is coherent with well-structured paragraphs but the conclusion requires more development. Well-chosen textual reference and integration of supporting evidence reflect a personal engagement with the poems. A strong sense of audience has been demonstrated with a few lapses in appropriate tone. A thorough understanding of literary devices and how they create meaning is apparent despite a few errors. Sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure have been used, and spelling and punctuation are well handled.

Flynn’s response demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade B standard midway through Stage 4.