Year 9
Subject: English
Topic/Unit: Poetry of Protest
When: Autumn 1

Huntington School
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Overview: This unit explores how poets use language to challenge authority and advocate for social change. Students examine historical and modern protests, including the **Industrial Revolution**, the **Peterloo Massacre**, **American segregation**, and **Nigerian dictatorship**. The curriculum covers foundational Romantic poets like William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley alongside diverse modern voices such as Maya Angelou and Niyi Osundare.

Why this? Why now? Why does it matter? Studying protest poetry enables students to think critically about social issues and the power of language. In Year 9, it is essential for students to understand how literature can start big conversations and represent people fighting against discrimination. This unit provides a platform to explore the historical and cultural impact of poetry on our society.

Building on...building to: This unit builds on Year 7 and 8 skills in analysing authorial methods such as similes and personification. It provides horizontal links to History through the study of the Suffragette movement and the Industrial Revolution. Vertically, it prepares students for the **GCSE Power and Conflict** poetry anthology and **A-Level studies** in political and social protest.

Sequence Summary:

- **Weeks 1–2:** William Blake's 'The Chimney Sweeper' and the exploitation of child labour during the Industrial Revolution.
- **Weeks 3–4:** Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Song to the Men of England', democracy, and the Peterloo Massacre.
- **Weeks 5–6:** Abel Meeropol's 'Strange Fruit' and the brutality of Jim Crow era racism.
- **Week 7:** Niyi Osundare's 'Not My Business' and the tyranny of 1990s Nigerian dictatorship.
- **Weeks 8–9:** Maya Angelou's 'The Caged Bird' and 'Still I Rise', focusing on segregation, inequality, and female empowerment.
- **Week 10:** Carol Ann Duffy's 'Education for Leisure' and a debate on censorship.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Concepts:** Tyranny, Exploitation, Manipulation, Inequality, Discrimination, Segregation, Democracy.
- **Methods:** Symbolism, Extended Metaphor, Caesura, Plosives, Refrain, Juxtaposition, Sibilance.

Assessments:

- **Assessment 1 (Week 4):** Multiple choice and short answers on historical context and symbolism, plus one analytical paragraph.
- **Assessment 2 (Week 10):** A comparative assessment analysing how Osundare and Angelou present protests and emotions.

Able and Interested: Students are encouraged to engage with wider reading, including *Flyering for the Revolution* and articles from the **Poetry Foundation**. Challenge tasks involve exploring complex authorial intentions and the structural impact of breaking a refrain.

Inclusion, Personal Development and Wider Skills: The unit promotes **British Values** through the study of democracy and individual liberty. It fosters empathy by exploring the lived experiences of marginalized groups across different centuries and continents.

Homework: Homework sits separate to this unit as students continue to complete their SPARX reader.