All That Glisters

Short stories by
Anne Donovan
National 5 Scottish Text
Welcome back everyone to another week of English home learning. In preparation for the National 5 exam next year we will be studying two of the four short stories written by Scottish author Anne Donovan. Together these four stories form the course for the Scottish text section of the critical reading paper.

The Scottish text part of the exam is worth **20 percent of your overall grade for National 5 English**. It is important to take your time and carefully read/listen to the stories and complete the tasks for the remainder of this term. (These texts will also be taught in class when you eventually return to school.)

The short stories are written in Scots/Glaswegian dialect. The first of these that we will be studying is titled ‘All that Glisters’.

**Over the next series of lessons we will be learning …**

- To explain the main ideas of the story
- To analyse the content, form and language of *All That Glisters*
- To use evidence from the text to support analysis and develop ideas

**We will be successful if...**

- We can explain the main ideas and themes of the story.
- We can identify and explain language techniques used by the writer such as word choice, imagery, symbolism, dialect and other language techniques.
- We can apply the formulae to answer different exam style questions.
(INTRODUCTION IS ON THE NEXT PAGE)
Introduction- ‘All That Glisters’

‘All that Glisters’ by Anne Donovan is a relatively modern short story set in Glasgow. The story uses a 1st person narrative from the perspective of the main character who is a young 12 year old girl called Clare, and we are moved by her special relationship with her father, who is tragically dying due to Asbestos poisoning.

The title - ‘All That Glisters’

The title is a reference to the Shakespeare play *The Merchant of Venice*, the full line being ‘All that glisters is not gold’. ‘Glisters’ is also an unusual word meaning ‘glitters’. The meaning is that, just because something appears to be good, it doesn’t mean that it is good. This makes the title something of a puzzle for the reader as we try to connect it to the plot.

Q1. Can you think of any other novels or short stories with a message in their titles that are still relevant today? (Or song titles?) Write them down.
On the next pages of this booklet is a copy of *All That Glisters*. Please take your time to read it. It is strongly recommended that you should also listen to the author Anne Donovan reading the story via the audio link before attempting the tasks and activities that follow.

The audio version of the story can be accessed via the following link:

[https://soundcloud.com/canongate-books/all-that-glisters-by-anne](https://soundcloud.com/canongate-books/all-that-glisters-by-anne)
ALL THAT GLISTERS

Thon wee wifie brung them in, the wan that took us for two days when Mrs McDonald wis aff. She got us tae make Christmas cards wi coloured cardboard and felties, which is a bit much when we’re in second year, but naebody wis gonnae say anythin cos it’s better than daein real work. Anyway ah like daein things like that and made a right neat wee card for ma daddy wi a Christmas tree and a robin and a bit a holly on it.

That’s lovely, dear. What’s your name?

Clare.

Would you like to use the glitter pens?

And she pulled oot the pack fæ her bag.

Ah’d never seen them afore. When ah wis in Primary Four the teacher gied us tubes of glitter but it wis quite messy. Hauf the stuff ended up on the flair and it wis hard tae make sure you got the glue in the right places. But these pens were different cos the glue wis mixed in wi the glitter so you could jist draw with them. It wis pure brilliant, so it wis. There wis four colours, red, green, gold and silver, and it took a wee while tae get the hang of it. You had tae be careful when you squeezed the tube so’s you didnae get a big blob appearin at wanst, but efter a few goes ah wis up an runnin.

And when ah’d finished somethin amazin hud happened. Ah cannae explain whit it wis but the glitter jist brought everythin tae life, gleamin
and glisterin agin the flat cardboard. It wis like the difference between a Christmas tree skinklin wi fairy lights an wan lyin deid an daurk in a corner.

Ma daddy wis dead chuffed. He pit the card on the bedside table and smiled.

*Fair brightens up this room, hen.*

It's good tae find sumpn that cheers him up even a wee bit because ma daddy's really sick. He's had a cough fur as long as ah can remember, and he's been workin fur years, but these past three month he cannae even get oot his bed. Ah hear him coughin in the night sometimes and it's different fae the way he used tae cough, comes fae deeper inside him somehow, seems tae rack his hale body fae inside oot. When ah come in fae school ah go and sit wi him and tell him aboot whit's happened that day, but half the time he looks away fae me and stares at a patch on the downie cover where there's a coffee stain that ma ma cannae wash oot. He used tae work strippin oot buildins and he wis breathin in stour aw day, sometimes it wis that bad he'd come hame wi his hair and his claes clartit wi it. He used tae kid on he wis a ghost and walk in the hoose wi his arms stretched oot afore him and ah'd rin and hide unner the stair, watchin him walk by wi the faint powdery whiteness floatin roon his heid.

He never knew there wis asbestos in the dust, never knew a thing aboot it then, none of them did. Noo he's an expert on it, read up aw these books tae try and unnerstaun it fur the compensation case. Before he got really sick he used tae talk aboot it sometimes.

*You see, hen, the word asbestos comes fae a Greek word that means indestructible. That's how they use it fur fireproofin – the fire cannae destroy it.*

*You mean if you wore an asbestos suit you could walk through fire and it widnae hurt you?*
The next day the wee wumman let me use the pens again. Sometimes when you think somethin's brilliant it disnae last; you get fed up wi' it dead quick an don't know why you wanted it in the first place. But the pens werenae like that; it wis even better than the first time cos ah knew whit tae dae wi' them. Yesterday ah'd put the glitter on quite thick in a solid block a colour, but today ah found a different way a daein it almost by accident. Ah'd drawn a leaf shape and coloured it green but a bit squirted oot intae a big blob, so ah blotted it and when ah took the paper away the shape that wis left wis nicer than the wan ah'd made deliberately. The outline wis blurred and the glitter wis finer and lighter, the colour of the card showin through so it looked as if sumbdy'd sprinkled it. Steidy ladelin it on; it looked crackin. The teacher thought so too.

*It's lovely, Clare. It's more . . . subtle.*

Subtle. Ah liked that word.

Ah tellt ma daddy aboot it that night efter school, sittin on the chair beside his bed. He seemed a bit better than usual, mair alert. Listenin tae whit ah hud tae say, but his skin wis a terrible colour and his cheeks were hollow.

*Whit did she mean, subtle, hen? How wis it subtle?*

Ah tried tae think of the words tae explain it, but ah couldnae. Ah looked at ma fingers which were covered in glitter glue and then at ma daddy's haun lyin on the bedcover, bones stickn oot and veins showin through. Ah took his haun in mines and turnt it roon so his palm faced upwards.

*Look, daddy.*

Ah showed him the middle finger of ma right haun, which wis thick
HIEROGLYPHICS

wi solid gold, then pressed doon on his palm. The imprint of ma finger left sparkly wee trails a light.

He smiled, a wavery wee smile.

Aye, hen. Subtle.

That night ah lay awake fur a while imaginin aw the things ah could dae wi the glitter pens. Ah really wanted tae make sumpn fur ma daddy's Christmas wi them. The tips of ma fingers were still covered in glitter, and they sparkled in the daurk. Ah pressed ma fingers aw ower the bedclothes so they gleamed in the light fae the streetlamps ootside, then ah fell intae a deep glistry sleep.

£3.49 for a pack of four. And ah hud wan ninety-three in ma purse.

Ah lifted the pack and walked to the check-out.

Much are they?

Three forty-nine.

Aye, but much are they each?

The wumman at the till hud dyed jet-black hair and nae eyebrows. We don't sell them individually.

She spat oot the word individually as if it wis sumpn disgusting.

Aye, but you'll get mair fur them. Look, you can have wan ninety-three fur two.

A'hve already tellt you that we don't sell them individually, ah cannae split the pack.

Ah could see there wis nae point in arguin wi her so ah turnt roon and walked towards the shelf tae pit them back. If Donna'd been wi me, she'd just have knocked them. She's aye takin sweeties an rubbers an wee things like that. She's that casual aboot it. she can jist walk past a shelf and wheech sumpn intae her pocket afore awbdy notices, never gets caught. And she's that innocent-lookin, wi her blonde frizzy curls an her neat school uniform naebdy wid guess tae look at her she wis a tea-leaf.
ALL THAT GLISTERS

She's aye on tae me tae dae it, but ah cannae. Ah suppose it's cos of ma ma and da, they're dead agin thievin. Donna widnae rob hooses or steal sumpn oot yer purse but she disnae think stealin oot a shop is stealin. A lot of folk think like that. Donna's big brother Jimmy wanst tried tae explain tae me that it wis OK tae steal ooty shops cos they made such big profits that they were really stealin affy us (the workin classes he cries us though he husny worked a day in his life) and they're aw insured anyway so it disnae matter. Even though ah can see the sense in whit Jimmy's sayin, well, ma daddy says stealin is stealin, and ah cannae go against his word.

In the end ah sellt ma dinner tickets tae big Maggie Hughes and all week ah wis starvin for ah only hud an apple or a biscuit ma ma gied me fur a playpiece. But on Friday it wis worth it when ah went doon the shops at lunchtime tae buy the pens. It wis a different wumman that served me and she smiled as she pit them in a wee plastic poke.

*Are you gonnae make Christmas decorations, hen?*

*Ah'm no sure.*

*Ah got some fur ma wee boy an he loved them.*

*Aye, they're dead good. Thanks.*

Ah couldnae wait tae show them tae ma da, but as soon as ah opened the door of the hoose ah kneaw there wis sumpn wrang. It wis that quiet, nae telly, nae radio on in the kitchen. Ma mammy wis sittin on the settee in the livin room. Her face wis white and there were big black lines under her eyes.

*Mammy, whit's...*

*C'mere, hen, sit doon beside me.*

She held her weddin ring between the thumb and first finger of her right haun, twisin it roon as she spoke and ah saw how loose it wis on her finger. No long ago it wis that tight she couldnae get it aff.
Hieroglyphics

Clare, yer daddy had a bad turn jist this afternoon and we had tae go tae the hospital wi him. Ah'm awful sorry, hen, ah don't know how tae tell you, but yer daddy's died.

Ah knew it wis comin, ah think ah'd known since ah walked intae the hoose, but when she said the words the coldness shot through me till ah felt ma bones shiverin and ah heard a voice, far away in anither room, shoutin but the shouts were muffled as if in a fog, and the voice wis shoutin naw, naw, naw!

And ah knew it wis ma voice.

We sat there, ma mammie and me, her airms roon me, till ah felt the warmth of her body gradually dissolve the ice of mine. Then she spoke, quiet and soft.

Now, hen, you know that this is fur the best, no fur us but fur yer daddy.

Blue veins criss-crossed the back of her haun. Why were veins blue when blood wis red?

You know yer daddy'd no been well fur a long time. He wis in a lot of pain, and he wisnae gonnae get better. At least this way he didnae suffer as much. He's at peace noo.

We sat for a long time, no speakin, just hauin hauns.

The funeral wis on the Wednesday and the days in between were a blur of folk comin an goin, of makin sandwiches an drinkin mugs of stewed tea, sayin rosaries an pourin oot glasses of whisky for men in overcoats. His body cam hame tae the hoose and wis pit in their bedroom. Ma mammie slept in the bed settee in the livin room wi ma Auntie Pauline.

Are you sure that you want tae see him?

Ah wis sure. Ah couldnae bear the fact we'd never said goodbye and kept goin ower and ower in ma mind whit ah'd have said tae him if ah'd known he wis gonnae die so soon. Ah wis feart as well, right enough.
Ah'd never seen a deid body afore, and ah didnae know whit tae expect, but he looked as if he wis asleep, better in fact than he'd looked when he wis alive, his face had mair colour, wis less yella lookin an lined. Ah sat wi him fur a while in the room, no sayin anythin, no even thinkin really, jist sittin. Ah felt that his goin wis incomplete and ah wanted tae dae suman fur him, but that's daft, whin can you dae when sumbdy's deid? Ah wondered if ah should ask ma mammy but she wis that withdrawn intae hersel, so busy wi the arrangements that ah didnae like tae. She still smiled at me but it wis a watery far-away smile and when she kissed me goodnight ah felt she wis haudin me away fae her.

On the Wednesday mornin ah got up early, got dressed and went through tae the kitchen. Ma Auntie Pauline wis sittin at the table havin a cuppa tea and a fag and when she looked up her face froze over.

_Whit the hell dae you think you're daein? Go and get changed this minute._

_But these are ma best claes._

_You cannæ wear red tae a funeral. You have tae show respect fur the deid._

_But these were ma daddy's favourites. He said ah looked brillant in this._

Ah mind his face when ah came intae the room a couple of month ago, after ma mammy'd bought me this outfit fur ma birthday; a red skirt and a zip-up jacket wi red tights tae match.

_You're a sight fur sore eyes, hen._

_That sounds horrible, daddy._

_He smiled at me._

_It disnae mean that, hen, it means you look that nice that you would make sore eyes feel better. Gie's a twirl, princess._

_And ah birled roon on wan leg, laughin._

*
Hieroglyphics

They claes are no suitable for a funeral.

Ah’m gonnae ask ma mammy.

Ah turned to go oot the room.

Don’t you dare disturb your mother on a day like this tae ask her aboot claes. Have you no sense? Clare, you’re no a baby, it’s time you grew up and showed some consideration for other folk. Get back in that room and put on your school skirt and sweatshirt and your navy-blue coat. And ah don’t want to hear another word aboot this.

In the bedroom ah threw masel intae a corner and howled ma heid aff. The tears kept comin and comin till ah felt ah wis squeezed dry and would never be able tae shed anither tear. Ah took aff the red claes and changed intae ma grey school skirt and sweatshirt and pit ma navy-blue coat ower it. Ah looked at masel in the full-length mirror in the middle of the wardrobe and saw this dull drab figure, skin aw peely-wally. Ma daddy would have hated tae see me like this but ah didnae dare go against ma auntie’s word.

The only bit of me that had any life aboot it wis ma eyes fur the tears had washed them clean and clear. A sunbeam came through the windae and ah watched the dustspecks dancin in its light. There was a hair on the collar of ma coat and it lit up intae a rainbow of colours. As ah picked it up and held it in ma fingers, an idea came tae me. Ah went tae ma schoolbag which had been left lyin in the corner of the room since Friday, took oot ma pack of glitter pens and unwrapped them. Ah took the gold wan, squeezin the glitter on ma fingers then rubbin it intae ma hair, then added silver and red and green. The strands of hair stood oot roon ma heid like a halo, glisterin and dancin in the light. Ah covered the dull cloth so it wis bleezin wi light, patterns scattered across it, even pit some on ma tights and ma shoes. Then ah pressed ma glittery fingers on ma face, feelin ma cheekbones and eyebrows and the soft flesh of ma mouth and the delicate skin of ma eyelids. And ah felt sad for a moment as ah
thought of the deid flesh of ma daddy, lyin alone in the cold church. Then ah stood and looked in the mirror at the glowin figure afore me and ah smiled.

Subtle, daddy?
Aye, hen, subtle.
He used to work strippin oot buildins and he wis breathin in stour aw day, sometimesit wis that bad he’d come hame wi his hair and his claes clartit wi it. He used tae kid on he wis a ghost and walk in the hoose wi his airms stretched oot afore him and ah’d rin and hide unner the stair, watchin him walk by wi the faint powdery whiteness floatin roon his heid.

3a). What kinds of tasks did Clare’s dad’s work involve in the past and what impact did it have on him in this excerpt?

3b). What is asbestosis? Describe some of the effects and causes. You may use the following website to help you.

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Asbestosis/

3c) Clare has very fond memories of playing hide and seek ‘ghosts’ games with her dad. How might this scene relate to the title “All that Glisters”? (The idea that all that glitters is not gold?)

d) How does this excerpt act as one example of foreshadowing in the story?
Now that we have read the story and looked at some brief context we are going to try to analyse a passage and attempt exam style questions. Have a look at the planned learning below and read the information before attempting the tasks.

**National 5 Scottish text**

**Learning Intentions**
Learning how to answer language questions in the Scottish text critical reading paper
Learning about WIST

**We will be successful if:**
We learn the formula for answering language questions
We know what WIST stands for
We know what to include in our ‘quotes and comments’ to get marks
LANGUAGE QUESTIONS (WIST)

This week we are going to learn about language questions. Whenever you are asked to answer a question about the use of LANGUAGE in your Scottish text paper in National 5 English, always think ‘WIST’!

**WORD CHOICE**

**IMAGERY**

**SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

**TONE**

Some of these are ‘umbrella’ terms meaning they cover lots of different aspects of the writer’s style and craft (all of the techniques used in their writing to make their work interesting.) With language questions you can chose ANY interesting aspect of ‘WIST’ from the story to comment on in your answer to pick up marks.

You don’t need to know all of these off by heart (or use the terms in your answers) to get marks, but it does help to have knowledge of them.

- Individual words and/or short phrases used by the author for effect.
- (Anything that isn’t real or literal)
- The list is endless here.
- Angry
- Light hearted
- Disapproving
- Humorous...

- Metaphors
- Onomatopoeia
- Personification
- Similes
- List
- Repetition
- Parenthesis
- Rhetorical question
- Colon
- Exclamation mark
- Alliteration
All That Glisters  by Anne Donnovan

And when ah’d finished something amazing hud happened. Ah cann explain whit it wis but the glitter jist brought everythin tae life, gleamin and glisterin agin the flat cardboard. It wis like the difference between Christmas tree skinklin wi fairy lights and wan lyin deid an daurk in a corner.

Ma daddy wis dead chuffed. He pit the card on the bedside table and smiled.

Fair brightens up this room, hen.

It’s good tae find sumpn that cheers him up even a wee bit because ma daddy’s really sick. He’s had a cough fur as long as ah can remember, and he husny worked fur years, but these past three month he cann even get oot his bed. Ah hear him coughin in the night sometimes and it’s different fae the way he used tae cough, come fae deeper inside him somehow, seems tae rack his hale body fae inside oot. When ah come in fae school ah go and sit wi him and tell him aboot whit’s happened that day, but hauf the time he looks away fae me and stares at a patch on the downie cover where there’s a coffee stain that ma ma cann wash oot. He used to work strippin oot buildins and he wis breathin in stour aw day, sometimes it wis that bad he’d come hame wi his hair and his claes clartit wi it.

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He never knew there wis asbestos in the dust, never knew a thing aboot it then, nane of them did. Noo he’s an expert on it, read up aw these books tae try and unnerstaun it fur the compensation case. Before he got really sick he used tae talk aboot it sometimes.

You see, hen, the word asbestos comes fae a Greek word that means indestructible. That’s how they use it fur fireproofin – the fire cann destroy it.

You mean if you wore an asbestos suit you could walk through fire and it widny hurt you?

Aye. In the aulden days they used tae bury the royals in it. They cried it the funeral dress of kings.
Example question 1

Q1. Look at lines 1-5.
Explain how the author uses language to help the reader understand Clare’s experience of making the Christmas card for her dad. (2 Marks)

Tips to answer this:
- remember to quote ANYWHERE lines 1-5
- follow the formula (quote then comment)
- In your comment section you comment on any aspect of ‘WIST’.
- Remember you can include names of techniques if you know them to impress your marker, but you don’t have to! (You will still get the marks as long as you make an appropriate comment that fits the question.)

Example answers- question 1

Q1 Example answer 1 (with the technique in the answer)
QUOTe: ‘glitter...gleamin and glisterin’. (1 MARK)

COMMENT: The writer uses alliteration here which suggests that Clare really enjoyed making the Christmas card for her dad and that the glitter (in her opinion) made it look much nicer. It shows her enthusiasm for wanting to make her dad feel better and also shows her compassion and care for him in going to the effort of making it. (1 MARK)

OR

Q1 Example answer 2 (without the technique in the answer)
QUOTe: “It wis like the difference between Christmas tree skinklin wi fairy lights and wan lyin deid an daurk in a corner.” (1 MARK)

COMMENT: Clare’s humour here reveals she is very proud of the card she has made for her dad. She’s confident it will make him happy because the glitter effect makes the Christmas tree really sparkle. She knows her dad will love it. (1 MARK)
Use the same excerpt above from the story and use the formula to answer the following questions.

Q4a) Look at lines 9-19.

By referring to the use of LANGUAGE, describe how the author makes the impact of asbestosis in Clare’s daddy’s life very clear. (6 marks)

- Tips* You will need to complete the formula (x3) to get all 6 marks.
- Use the following structure to help you answer.

QUOTE/REFERENCE:

COMMENT:

QUOTE/REFERENCE TO TEXT:

COMMENT:

QUOTE/REFERENCE TO TEXT:

COMMENT:

Q4b) Look at lines 20-23.

By referring to one example of language, how does the author create a clear impression of Clare’s memories of her dad? (2 Marks)
(Tips to answer Q4b)

- (1x Quote/ appropriate comment)
- In your comment describe the memories and what the language suggests about her memories.

Here is the formula structure to help you again for Q4b)

QUOTE/REFERENCE:

COMMENT THAT ANSWERS THE QUESTION:

Finally ... Last one!

Q4c) Look at lines 30-33.

By referring to an example of WORD CHOICE, explain how the author creates a sense of unease. (2 Marks)