

Analyse 'Cousin Kate' by Christina Rossetti. Look closely at the content, theme, mood, language and characters in the poem.

Paragraph 1 - Introduction.

Say that you will be analysing the poem. **Briefly** tell the **story** of this **narrative** poems. *E.g. In the poem 'Cousin Kate', Rossetti describes a cottage maiden who...*

Paragraph 2 - 'Cousin Kate'

Paragraph 3 - Say when and by whom the poem was written. Mention the setting. Explain the **themes** of the poem. *E.g. The main themes within 'Cousin Kate' are love and relationships...* Look at the different types of love – the cottage maiden's, Cousin Kate's and the Lord's. How is their love described? What is the nature of the relationship? Use **quotations** and **explain** any images or imagery. Other ideas that the poems explore are marriage, motherhood, abuse of power/ wealth (poverty), betrayal and female roles. Are there any messages in these poems?

Paragraph 3 – Images and Feelings

Discuss the **feelings** of the cottage maiden. Say that 'Cousin Kate' is written in the first person – from the **point of view** of the cottage maiden. Therefore, it allows her to express a number of feelings. What is the **mood** of this poem? (**Refer to your notes and quotations**). Show how feelings are shown by the use of images. *E.g The cottage maiden says that she, 'might have been a dove' if she had not fallen for the advances of the lord. She uses the image of the dove in order to allude to her innocence.*

Paragraph 4 – Imagery and Mood

Comment on the use of **similes** in 'Cousin Kate' and say how they create mood. *E.g. In 'Cousin Kate' the simile: 'He wore me like a silken knot' links the treatment of the cottage maiden with the treatment of discarded clothing. It shows that she can be 'put on' and 'taken off' just like a piece of clothing.*

### Paragraph 5 – The lord

Say that the poem has a description of the male character. What do we know about him? How is he presented? Use examples and quotations to support your opinions. How does he treat the cottage maiden? *E.g. The Lord has power over the woman. In particular, he uses his wealth and charm to seduce the cottage maiden.* How does the poet make us dislike the Lord? (Hint – descriptions and actions)

### Paragraph 6 – The Cottage Maiden

Say that the poem has a female as the central character. What do we know about her? How is she presented? Use examples and quotations to support your opinions. How does she react to the treatment she receives from the lord? (Hint – she has a number of differing reactions.) How do others treat her? Briefly consider the fate of single parents in the ‘olden days’. Is the cottage maiden a strong or a weak character? (Hint – look at the language she uses.) Do you sympathise with her? Why? Do you respect her? Why? Briefly give your own response to the poem.

### Paragraph 7 - Conclusion

The conclusion should be a summary of what you have shown in the essay. As a guide, use a couple of sentences to summarise each of the paragraphs in the main body of your essay. *E.g. In conclusion, we can see that the poem ...*