

Investigate! *Shut Out*

Investigating *Shut Out*

- ❖ How sympathetic do you feel towards the speaker?
- ❖ What surprises you about the situation the poem describes?
- ❖ What is the effect of being shut out, rather than shut in somewhere?
 - Do you think that the predicament of being shut out can be considered in the same way as the predicament of being imprisoned?
- ❖ List all the points of ambiguity that you can identify in the poem
 - What is the effect of the uncertainty that the poem creates?
- ❖ How likely do you think it is that Rossetti intended the speaker of the poem to be interpreted as Eve?

Investigating language and tone

- ❖ Do you think that the speaker's hope that she will return to the garden is genuine?
- ❖ Why do you think that the spirit remains silent?
 - What is the effect of his silence?
- ❖ To whom do you think that the poem is directed?
 - Or do you consider it as a representation of the speaker's private thoughts?

Investigating structure and versification

- ❖ Describe how the structure of the poem contributes to the progression of its narrative.
- ❖ Note down the words that are repeated
 - Why do you think Rossetti wants to draw attention to these particular words?

Investigating imagery and symbolism

- ❖ What associations do you have with the idea of iron bars?
 - How are these associations met in the poem?
- ❖ Why, do you think, does the spirit seal up the wall?
 - What is the effect of his act on the speaker?

Investigating themes

- ❖ List all the references to sight, vision and blindness that you can find in the poem
- ❖ What is the effect that these references create?