

Investigate!

To Lalla, reading my verses topsy-turvy

Investigating *To Lalla, reading my verses topsy-turvy*

- ❖ Describe your initial reaction to this poem
 - Does it surprise you?
- ❖ How does it differ to some of Rossetti's other poems?
 - Look particularly at *Winter: My Secret*.
- ❖ How would you describe Rossetti's attitude towards children?
- ❖ What do you associate with the idea of wisdom?
 - How are these associations met in *To Lalla*?

Investigating language and tone

- ❖ Whom do you think Rossetti includes when she uses the term 'us'?
 - Do you include yourself in this grouping?
- ❖ Towards the end of the poem, Rossetti asks, 'How should I give answer' to Lalla's 'asking look?' (l. 25-6)
 - Who do you think she is asking here?

Investigating structure and versification

- ❖ Circle the punctuation marks that are used in the poem
 - How does the punctuation contribute to the tone of the speaker and to the pace of the poem?
 - Give specific examples
- ❖ How does Rossetti use poetic techniques to convey Lalla's 'silence' (l. 13) as she reads the book?

Investigating imagery and symbolism

- ❖ Turn the poem upside down and note down the shapes and the forms that you notice
- ❖ How encouraging do you think the narrator's voice is?
 - Why do you think that she encourages Lalla to 'Read on' (l. 29)?
- ❖ In view of this poem, describe the act of reading.

Investigating themes

- ❖ When you are reading a poem or novel, how important do you consider the author's initial intention to be?

Investigate! The poetry of Christina

Rossetti: *To Lalla*

- ❖ What does Rossetti suggest that the adult reader can learn from Lalla's engagement with her book?
- ❖ What similarities can you find between *To Lalla* and *What do the stars do?*
- ❖ What differences can you identify?