

Hopkins: (a) Alliteration

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** How does alliteration work, particularly in Hopkins' poetry?
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Students quickly write a 3 or 4 word phrase which alliterates, to describe: a storm at sea, a busy station, a street at night.
 - Each student chooses one of these and develops it into a sentence or two, using as much alliteration as possible.
 - Briefly discuss the effect achieved.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Give out the sheet of alliterative lines from Hopkins (*Hopkins: (a) Alliteration*).
 - Students annotate each, trying to be precise in the various effects achieved.
 - In what way do different letters create different effects?
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Medieval English poetry was based on alliteration rather than rhyme, usually with three or four examples in each line. Compare the following (from *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*: Brian Stone's translation for Penguin Classics) with Hopkins' use of alliteration.

This king lay at Camelot one
Christmastide,
With loyal lords, liegemen
peerless,
Members rightly reckoned of the
Round Table,
In splendid celebration, seemly
and carefree.

- ❖ **Recreative task:** Write a few lines of alliterative poetry, describing part of your journey from home to school.
- ❖ **Critical task:** Why does Hopkins choose to return to the alliterative form which had not been used for centuries before him?
 - What does he gain from this?
- ❖ **Extension task:** Find and read some more medieval alliterative verse.
 - Explore its power.

