

Task 2 – Key

	Words in the text		Words in the text
Ardent	Passionate	Remarkable	Memorable
Charming	Lovely	Renowned	Celebrated/popular
Commanding	Powerful	Turbulent	Tempestuous
Effortless	Fluent	Unhealthy	Unfit
Famous	Popular/celebrated	Unpleasant	Ugly

Dylan Marlais Thomas was born in Swansea, Wales, on 27 October 1914. The 'ugly, lovely' landscape of his hometown on the Welsh coast would be a major influence on all of his work. Although both of his parents were fluent Welsh speakers, Dylan Thomas, perhaps the most popular Welsh poet, was raised to speak only English. English was also the only subject in which he excelled at school.

After leaving school, Dylan Thomas got a job as a journalist and published his first collection of poems at the age of 20. In fact, his most celebrated poems, full of passionate musicality, were written when he was still a teenager. His powerful voice was made for the radio and he frequently recorded for the BBC. Perhaps his most memorable prose work is *Under Milk Wood*, a radio play for the BBC broadcast in 1954, in which the narrator invites the audience to listen to the dreams and thoughts of the inhabitants of a small fictional Welsh fishing village.

Dylan Thomas had a tempestuous life. In 1937 he married Caitlin Macnamara and although they had a problematical relationship, the couple had three children and remained together until his death. He was considered unfit to serve in the armed forces, because of his poor health and was much saddened by seeing his friends going to war. His personal struggles may have contributed to his growing dependence on alcohol, which is also believed to have led to his sudden premature death in 1953 in New York.

Task 3 – Key

1. True
2. True
3. False – he had his meals apart from them
4. True
5. False - he usually read them
6. True
7. False – he used to spend a predetermined time with the children but not the whole day

Script for BBC interview 'Dylan and the family'

Link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01tlptg>

Aeronwy: We were not expected to be with my father. We didn't expect it. If he sort of graciously condescended, as it were, to call us, that was something different. He would ask me to come and read with him or whatever but he'd have his meals separately to us. I mean, it even went to the extent of, when we travelled in the train, he would be in one carriage reading his novels, usually Agatha Christie, and eating his sweets - and we'd be in the other... you know... part of the train with my mother; in carriages not too far apart, but definitely apart.

Male voice: Aeronwy was ten when her father died; away at school, but she has vivid memories of some of her holiday times.

Aeronwy: I do have a very very happy recollection of at least a couple of Christmases spent when my father was at home. And even then, although he did play a lot of games with us in the afternoon, after his pub session in the morning, um... even then, it was always for a predetermined time. He would not spend the whole day with us.

Task 4 – Key

A. Fern Hill B. Under Milk Wood C. Do not go gentle into that good night D. A Child's Christmas in Wales

Task 5 – Possible answers

Dylan Thomas, one of the most (1) **celebrated/famous/renowned/popular** poets of the twentieth century, captures a child's eye view of a magical Christmas Day in a small Welsh town.

Fern Hill, is a (2) **lovely/charming** recreation of the poet's (3) **lovely/charming/memorable** childhood in (4) **lovely/charming** rural west Wales.

Thomas wrote 'Do not go gentle into that good night' for his dying father. It is one of Thomas' most (5) **celebrated/famous/renowned/popular** and (6) **powerful/remarkable/renowned** poems.

In *Under Milk Wood*, the narrator describes the (7) **turbulent/passionate/ardent/ ugly/ unpleasant** dreams and innermost thoughts of the inhabitants of a (8) **lovely/charming/ugly/unpleasant** small Welsh fishing village.

Dylan Thomas had a short and (9) **turbulent/tempestuous/passionate/ardent** life. His drinking habits made him (10) **unfit/unhealthy** and tainted his personal reputation, but they should not affect our appreciation of his literary talent.

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