

# Eclipse

- by Owen Sheers -

## Background information

Teachers may find it useful to use the internet to show pictures of a solar eclipse.

Behaviour of wildlife during a solar eclipse:

<https://www.eclipse-chasers.com/article/papers/wildlife01.html>

## Activities

### A

It is very important that learners realise that they will come to understand the poem and unlock the structure of the poem through careful thought and discussion.

Clues they should be alert to include: grammatical structure, repetition at the start of lines ('his shadow, falling across your ...'), the progress of the eclipse, and the move from the literal eclipse to the eclipse of the relationship.

It is not expected that they should work out the two line stanza structure, although they might logically suggest a stanza break after line 8.

### B

If learners are not clear about a solar eclipse, the poem will not be clear to them. This activity is designed to remove misconceptions, and prepare the ground for a good understanding of the poem. The teacher could select the best explanation and ask that learner/group to communicate this explanation to the whole class.

### C

The aim of this activity is to simply clarify the narrative of the poem, making clear that she is in the city and he is in the countryside amongst the fields.

### D

The experience of watching a dramatic natural astronomical event seems to release his emotions and raise his hopes.

# Eclipse

- by Owen Sheers -

## E

Learners may find the different potential meanings of 'between' intriguing. In the context of this part of the poem, the implication is that it is a link rather than a barrier (to him).

## F

It is difficult to demonstrate the structure of a poem. The use of the red and green highlights and the emphasis on connectives such as 'but' and 'however', signalling logical structure of the poem, may help in the exploration of other texts in addition to this one.

## G

While just 'naming the parts' is a futile exercise, the combination of knowledge of relevant terminology and the ability to comment on its effect is powerful. So the identification of the poetic technique should only be the starting point for deeper exploration - why has the poet used this particular technique, and why just here?

## H

This question allows learners to form an overview, exploring how this short poem traces the relationship between two people over a span of time, with perhaps differing hopes and expectations on each side.