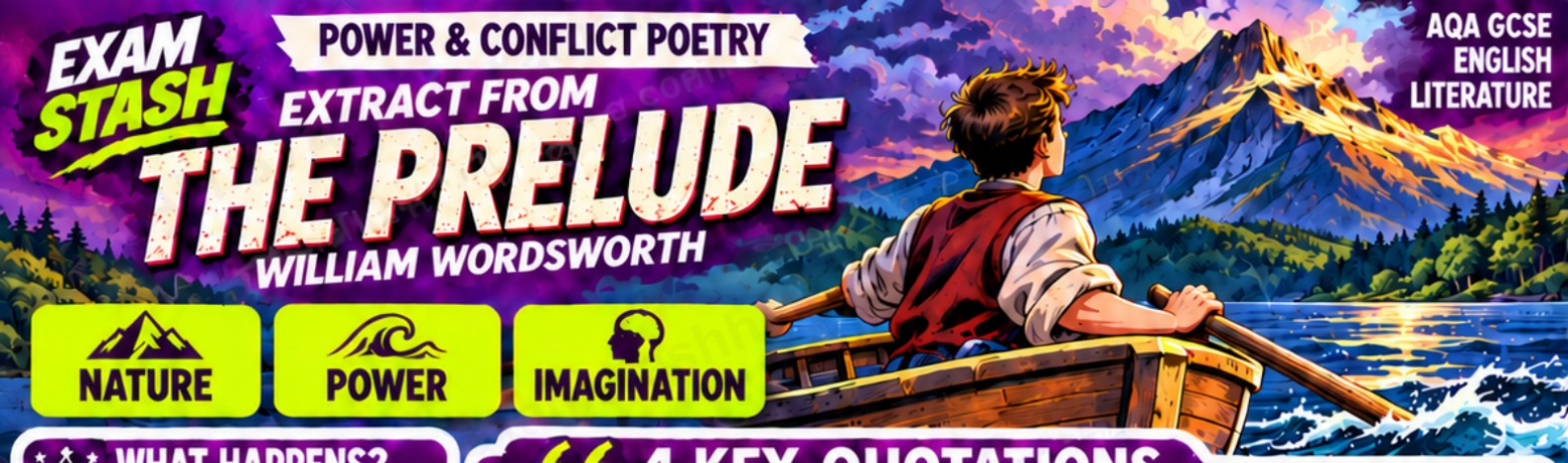
EXAM STASH

POWER & CONFLICT POETRY

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

EXTRACT FROM THE PRELUDE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



NATURE | POWER | IMAGINATION

WHAT HAPPENS?

A youthful boating adventure becomes an unsettling encounter with nature.

THE BIG IDEA

Nature overturns the young speaker's self-assurance and remains powerful inside his imagination.

POEM BREAKDOWN

One continuous stanza, three stages

TAKING THE BOAT:
Excited and confident, the young rower takes the boat. The hint of theft adds unease.

MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTER:
A peak seems to pursue him. Confidence turns to awe and fear.

AFTER RETURNING:
Disturbing images linger in the speaker's mind and dreams. The tone is reflective and troubled.

4 KEY QUOTATIONS

'an act of stealth'	**Method:** Moral diction	**Key word:** 'stealth' **Effect:** The speaker recognises secrecy and wrongdoing even before the apparently pleasurable adventure begins.
'Went heaving through the water like a swan;'	**Method:** Simile	**Key word:** 'swan' **Effect:** The youthful rower imagines graceful command of the water.
'a huge peak, black and huge,'	**Method:** Repetition	**Key word:** 'huge' **Effect:** Scale overwhelms the earlier graceful self-image.
'a trouble to my dreams,'	**Method:** Psychological aftermath	**Key word:** 'trouble' **Effect:** The event continues after physical danger has passed.

FORM & STRUCTURE

- An autobiographical verse extract in unrhymed iambic pentameter, or blank verse.
- The flowing, regular rhythm mirrors the calm confidence of the young rower.
- The shift from smooth movement to increasingly intense description shows the loss of control and the growing power of nature.

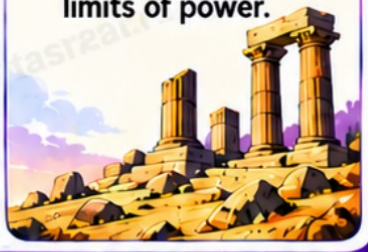
CONTEXT

- Wordsworth's Romantic writing explores the mind's relationship with nature.
- The extract appears in the posthumous 1850 Prelude.



COMPARE IT WITH...

- ***Storm on the Island:*** nature overturns human security.
- **Ozymandias:** limits of power.



RECALL QUESTION

Where does the speaker's sense of control begin to fail?

