***Warning* by Jenny Joseph**

When I am on old woman I shall wear purple

With a red hat which doesn’t go, and doesn’t suit me.

And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves

And satin sandals, and say we’ve no money for butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I’m tired

And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells

And run my stick along the public railings

And make up for the sobriety of my youth.

I shall go out in my slippers in the rain

And pick the flowers in other people’s gardens

And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat

And eat three pounds of sausages at a go

Or only bread and pickle for a week

And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry

And pay our rent and not swear in the street

And set a good example for the children.

We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practise a little now?

So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised

When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

***Handbag* by Ruth Fainlight**

My mother’s old leather handbag,

Crowded with letters she carried

All through the war. The smell

Of my mother’s handbag: mints

And lipstick and Coty powder.

The look of those letters, softened

And worn at the edges, opened,

Read, and refolded so often.

Letters from my father. Odour

Of leather and powder, which ever

Since then has meant womanliness,

And love, and anguish, and war.

Year 10 Unit 1 Practice Assessment

1. In ‘Warning’ how does the poet present ideas about getting old? (24 marks – 30 minutes)
2. In both ‘Warning’ and ‘Handbag’ the speakers describe perceptions of old age. What are the similarities and/ or differences between the ways the poets present these attitudes? (8 marks – 15 minutes)