**John Donne: Background Research**

You will not actually be tested on the context to John Donne’s poetry. However, an understanding of the world in which he wrote will help you to understand his poems better, and it is for this reason that I am asking you to do some research.

Choose one of the following in pairs and present your topic to the rest of the class.

1. Geography. What countries had been discovered by the time Donne was writing and what was discovered during his lifetime?
2. Science. What discoveries and inventions had there been before and during Donne’s time?
3. Astronomy. What did Donne’s contemporaries believe about the stars and planets?
4. Medicine. What did Donne’s contemporaries understand about the human body?
5. Religion. What was the belief system in England at this time?
6. Monarchy and war. Which monarchs were on the throne during Donne’s lifetime. Which wars were fought and why?
7. Society. How did society function during Donne’s time? Find out about: the aristocracy, patronage and power.
8. Women. How did the sixteenth century view women and relationships. What was women’s place in society?

You can present your research in one of the following ways:

• as a handout to be photocopied and distributed to the class

•as a powerpoint presentation using the multi - media projector and smartboard

• as a poster to go on the wall which people can copy from

 • as DVD documentary

• using photo story

 • as an audio CD - a radio 4 type documentary

• as a comic strip or story board

• anything else you can think of but check with me first!