Option A: “Poets are thus liberating gods.”

Compare Wordsworth’s Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) and Shelley’s *Defence of Poetry* (1821, pub. 1840), Emerson’s “The Poet” (1844), and Whitman’s Preface to *Leaves of Grass* (1855). What is the function of poetry and the role of the poet in each? Can you see ways that these poets build on each other, or are they operating independently? Can you discover some typically British ideas and methods to set against some typical American ones?

Option B: The WW poets in England and America

How is Walt Whitman like or unlike William Wordsworth? Compare their respective modes of symbolism. Consider their chosen poetic forms and genres. What role does nationality have? How do they embrace their respective poetic traditions? How does the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* compare with the Preface to *Leaves of Grass*? How do they view nature? What views of poetic diction can you infer from their work? Make a selection of these topics and weave a thesis that draws evidence from the poems themselves and works logically toward a concluding paragraph.