Choosing works created throughout different periods in an author's life may reveal certain things, such as whether or not his/her views has changed as society changed, or did his/her ideas and thoughts mature?

For example:

I might chose to compare texts from songs of innocence published in 1789 with those published in the new edition in 1794 when he combined innocence with experience.

I might chose to read one of his early texts on religion published in the years 1788-1790 and compare them with texts on religion published in 1804-1827 and see if his beliefs or views simply matured or changed altogether.

Or I might just pick three random texts, one in the beginning of his life, one in the middle of his career, and one at the end of his career…and see what changes, stays consistent, etc…and try to determine "why" by comparing what I discover against his life and society during specific times. Did something in society/his life happen that suddenly changed his outlook?

This challenges you to look beyond simple text and see what backs it and supports it. Literature is not just written down for the pleasure of the poet, he/she is trying to tell someone/people/the monarchy...etc…SOMETHING SPECIFIC. The truest understanding of literature lies there; in knowing what drove the author think up a thought and write it down for the masses to experience.