Section 1
Poetry
Since Brass, Nor Stone,  
Nor Earth, Nor Boundless Sea

**William Shakespeare**

**Concept**
- Sonnet as a literary form
- The strong bond of friendship can withstand the destructive power of time.
- Immortality of art

**Learning Outcomes**
The learner will be able to:
- write a few sentences on a given topic in the form of prose/verse
- identify the contributions of the poet
- demonstrate an awareness of the social and literary background of the poem
- define the features of a sonnet
- locate new words and identify their meaning
- read and discuss the theme of the poem
- identify and state the strategies used by the poet
- comment on the symbolic elements in the poem
- illustrate the various poetic devices employed in the poem
- analyze the rhyme scheme and list rhyming words
- collect similar poems from different periods
- devise modern technology to visualize the poem
- compare the poem with other poems of the same genre
- participate in competitions by reciting the poem

**Materials**
- Text in print
- Audio/Video presentation of the poem
- Video clippings of different plays by Shakespeare

**ICT**
Watch video presentations of Shakespeare's biography and sonnets available on YouTube.
Introduction

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word ‘sonetto’ which means ‘a sound’. It was the Italian poet Petrarch who introduced the sonnet form first, to express his love for his beloved Laura. A sonnet is a poetic form consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. The brevity of the form favours concentrated expression of an idea or passion. Critics have recognized varying sonnet forms, but only two types have gained popularity – The Italian (Petrarchan) and the English (Shakespearean).

The English sonnet developed by Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey in the sixteenth century came to be called Shakespearean after its greatest practitioner. Some of the most famous sonneteers in England, other than Shakespeare are Milton, Wordsworth, and D. G. Rossetti. Longfellow, Jones Very, G. H. Boker and E. A. Robinson are generally credited with writing some of the best sonnets in American Literature. Some of the most famous sonnet sequences in English literature are those by Shakespeare (154 in the group), Sidney’s Astrophel and Stella, Spenser’s Amoretti, Rossetti’s House of Life and Mrs. Browning’s Sonnets from the Portuguese. William Ellery Leonard, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and W. H. Auden have done distinguished work in the sonnet and the sonnet sequence in this century.

Summary

The first quatrain reflects the sad fact that all things on earth are mortal. Metals like brass, or strong objects like stone and even the limitless sea are vulnerable before the ravishing force of time. In the second quatrain, the poet asks, how can beauty, which is no stronger than a flower, resist death? The poet ponders over the sad fact that his friend’s beauty which is as refreshing as the sweet breath of summer will also wither away. The third quatrain reflects upon the poet’s efforts to keep the friend immortal. He is frightened by the thought of his friend’s fragility. He asks himself how to preserve the beauty of time’s most perfect creation. In the concluding couplet he finds the solution that his poetry dedicated to the friend will keep him shining forever.

Entry activity

The teacher plays a song on friendship and asks the learners to express their love for their best friend in a few lines. It can be in prose or verse. After presentation by the learners, the teacher asks them to name any poem in Malayalam which was written for a friend. After eliciting the answers, the teacher leads the discussion to similar poems they have learnt in English. Teacher states that they are going to deal with a poem written about a friend by one of the greatest writers in English. Let the learners make a guess
the poet. Ask them to list a few works by Shakespeare.

The teacher plays a few video clippings from different plays of Shakespeare.

Teacher asks if they were familiar with any poem written by Shakespeare and familiarizes them with Shakespeare’s poems. Through this interactive session, the teacher should lead the attention of the learners to the fact that Shakespeare is one of the greatest poets in English. An idea about the peculiarities of the Elizabethan Age is to be instilled by the teacher.

**Reading the poem**

The teacher plays an audio text of the sonnet. The learners listen carefully and grasp a general idea about the poem.

Silent reading by the learners follows during which they are asked to list down unfamiliar words and usages. They find out the meanings with the help of a dictionary or the teacher. Teacher initiates a discussion on the characteristics of the language of Shakespearean age.

**Introducing the sonnet form**

A general awareness about the sonnet form should be given. Ask the learners to note the number of lines and identify the rhyme scheme. Let them formulate an idea about the features of a sonnet.

Reference to iambic pentameter is not necessary at this stage. Illustrate how the sonnet is divided into three quatrains and a concluding couplet.

Teacher recites the poem with proper rhythm and intonation, conveying the emotions. The learners read the poem and attempt to answer the questions given along with the poem. The teacher should intervene and make sure that the learners comprehend a general idea about the theme of the poem with the help of scaffolding questions.

**Hints for scaffolding questions:**

1. The power of mortality destroys even hard objects like brass, stone etc.
2. Brass, stone and the sea contrasted with flower and beauty.
3. Rocks and gates of steel
4. The poet's friend
5. Time
6. His poetry will make the friend immortal.

**Understanding the poem**

The learners sit in groups and discuss the comprehension questions. Teacher should monitor the discussions and guides them towards the answers. Let them present their findings before the class. Hints towards the answers are given below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poems</th>
<th>English Literature - Teacher Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Immortality of art/ depth of friendship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Comparison of how time ravishes strong objects in nature and the chances of fragile objects to withstand decay.</td>
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<td>3. Summer symbolizes life itself</td>
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<td>4. Fearful meditation</td>
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<td>5. Tone of despair and fear changing into hope and optimism</td>
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<td>6. (Sad) mortality, beauty</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Boundless sea, wreckful siege of battering days, gates of steel, rocks impregnable</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The metaphor of battle between time and life</td>
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</table>

**Writing about the poem**

The learners read the poem again. The teacher initiates a discussion on the theme, tone, poetic devices and structure. Let the learners present their ideas randomly. The teacher charts the points. Using the chart as a guideline, the learners are asked to prepare a critical appreciation of the poem.

**Hints for appreciation**

1. **Theme** – Nothing but a work of art can withstand time’s ravages

2. **Tone** – Despair and fear changing to hope and optimism

**Poetic devices:**

a. Alliteration - ‘steel so strong’

b. Antithesis - ‘How with this rage shall... no stronger than a flower?’

c. Assonance – ‘hand can’

d. Conflict - between time and the poet’s friend

e. Consonance - ‘hand hold this’

f. Extended metaphor – summer’s battle against time

g. Hyperbole - ‘whose action is no stronger than a flower’

h. Metaphor - ‘Time’s best jewel from Time’s chest lie hid?’

i. Personification – Time, beauty, mortality, summer

**Structure** – fourteen-line poem which can be divided into four quatrains and a final concluding couplet with the rhyme scheme ‘abab, cdcd, efef, gg’.

2. The learners are asked to collect sonnets written in different literary periods. They can also collect pictures and biographical sketches of the poets and compile an album.

**Extended reading activity**

The learners are asked to read the sonnet by Mrs. Browning with the teacher’s support. Let them discuss the questions in groups. Filling the
Poems

comparison chart may be done individually.

CE Activity

• Prepare a biographical sketch of Shakespeare.

• Rewrite the poem in the form of a letter written by the poet to his friend.

• Prepare a short write-up on the Shakespearean age.

• Collect details on the most prominent poets of Shakespeare’s time.

• Conduct a recitation competition of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

T.E. questions

1. Write an essay on the theme of Sonnet 65.

2. How does Shakespeare bring out the destructive force of time in Sonnet 65?

3. Illustrate how the tone of the poem changes with the progress of thought.

4. Write a short note on the use of symbols, imagery and figures of speech by the poet in Sonnet 65.

5. Outline the evolution of thought in Sonnet 65.

6. ‘O, how shall summer’s sweet breath hold out’. Identify the poetic device used in this line.

7. ‘Shall Time’s best Jewel from Time’s chest lie hid? What is the figure of speech employed here?

References

The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets. - Helen Vendler.

Shakespeare’s Sonnets. New Haven – Steven Booth.

“Sonnet 65”. The Greenwood Companion to Shakespeare- Barry B. Adams

Martin, Philip. Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Self, Love and Art.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare- William James Craig

Sonnets (No Fear Shakespeare) - Spark notes

Shakespeare’s Sonnets- David West

The Sonnets of William Shakespeare- Jeffrey Caminsky

Shakespeare’s Sonnets – Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells

Shakespeare’s Sonnets- Dympna Callaghan

Teachers.yale.edu/curriculum/viewer/initiative_08.01.10_u
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sonnet_65

www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/65detail.html

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A Red Red Rose

Robert Burns

Concept
- Burns clearly states and restates the theme: the speaker loves the young lady beyond measure. The only way he can express his love for her is through vivid similes and hyperbolic comparisons.
- The poet's love is compared.
- Unbreakable promise of love.

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to:
- differentiate between a simile and a metaphor.
- understand universal symbols.
- grasp the meanings of archaic usages.

Materials
- Audio text of the poem

ICT
A Red Red Rose sung by-
- Ewan Walker on YouTube
- Andy M Stewart on YouTube
- Karen Matheson on YouTube
- Eva Cassidy on YouTube
- Eddy Reader on YouTube
- Izzy
- Kenneth Mc Keller

Introduction
Over the centuries, love has been a recurrent theme in literature. Some of those lyrics of love still remain favourites of the lovers of literature. Let's listen to a song of love which was once a traditional Scottish country song popular in the rural areas of Scotland in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Summary
The poem opens with the speaker comparing his love to a ‘Red Red Rose’. Later he describes how deep his love is. He will love his ‘lass’ as long as he is alive and until the world ends. At the end, he bids farewell and promises that he will return, even if he has to walk ten thousand miles.
Poems

Entry Activity

What gifts do you usually give your beloved ones on special occasions?

Why do you like gifting flowers?

If it is for a person you love the most, what colour would you prefer?


Social background

The 18th century was an important period for Scotland. Edinburgh was rapidly developing into a cultural centre in Europe. Burns tapped that new sense of cultural identity. Much of his poetry made use of Scottish folklore and legend. Commonly hailed as the ‘native bard’ of Scotland, Burns was a brilliant star in his life time. He died young at the age of 37. But it was after his death, that he became more popular.

There is a personal history behind this poem. Burns was head over heels in love with Jean Amour. But his proposal was ruthlessly rejected by her parents. To top it all, financial troubles forced him to go to Jamaica in search of a job. Hence this poem is a promise to his beloved that he would come back some day.

Burns wrote this poem as a traditional ballad in four stanzas of four lines each. ‘A Red Red Rose’ is a love poem written to be sung. Robert Burns based it in the folk version of a song he heard during his travels. Burns completed the poem in 1794 in an English dialect called Scots for publication in ‘Traditional Scottish ballads’. Burns wrote the poem in four quatrains (four line stanzas) with the following characteristics.

End Rhyme

In each stanza, the second and fourth lines end with masculine rhyme. End rhyme also occurs in the first and third lines of the third and fourth stanzas.

Meter

Most of the longer lines are in iambic tetrameter; the shorter ones in iambic trimeter. Iambic tetrameter is an eight syllable line with alternating pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables. Iambic Trimeter is a six syllable line with alternating pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables.

Hints for scaffolding questions

1. Burns, the poet
2. Red á strong/passionate Rose álove
3. Sweet melody
4. Until the world ends
5. That he will come back

Understanding the poem

1. Love - indicates the depth of his love.
Poems

2. Hyperbolic distance from Jamaica to Scotland.
3. Sweet melody.
4. By stating that he will love her until the world ends.
5. To indicate the strong bond of passionate love.
6. Imagery of hour glass, which measures the passage of an hour of time. The line ‘while the sands o’ life shall run’ means ‘as long as I am alive’.
7. ‘red, red rose’
8. ‘thou’ it were ten thousand mile’
9. Rocks melt with the sun/ though it were ten thousand mile.
10. Rejection and his imminent departure to Jamaica.

Writing about the poem

1. Love poem/similes from nature / figures of speech/ hyperbole
   1st stanza – the subject is love
   2nd stanza – depth of his love towards his beloved.
   3rd stanza – full of metaphors

English Literature – Teacher Text

2. Element of a romantic poem with emphasis on emotion rather than reason/ language more colloquial than poetic/ interest in folklore / passionate display of emotion/ interest in the supernatural/ idealism and affinity towards nature/ phenomenon of imagination/ symbolism/individualism

C E Activity

From the point of view of the beloved, attempt a reply to this poem in the same poetic structure.

T E Questions

1. ‘Robert Burns rehashed a Scottish song’. Comment.
2. How far is the poem original?
3. Comment on the figures of speech in the poem.
4. What personal reason compelled him to write the poem?
5. ‘A Red Red Rose’ is a song of love. Justify.

References

www.shmoop.com
www.123helpme.com/view
myvcseshop.blogspot.com

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The Tyger

William Blake

Concept
The poem deals with the issues of inspiration, poetry, mystical knowledge, God the sublime and sometimes even the fearsome.

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to:
- identify the poetic devices.
- comprehend the themes of the poem.
- compare two poems.

Learning materials
- Textbook
- ICT - Pictures of lamb and tiger available in the hyperlink
- Activity note book
- Audio recitation of both the poems

ICT
- Video clippings
- Audio recitation in YouTube
- Slide show of Blake’s paintings

Entry Activity
A number of pictures of animals like the lamb and the tiger are available. The teacher may show these to the learners, making use of ICT. The teacher can explain the power of words to create vibrant images. Blake was both an artist and poet, who with simple language could create a world of vigor and beauty.

Introduction
The poem, considered to be the masterpiece of Blake, belongs to the ‘Song of Experience’ series which was published in 1794, as a sequel to his ‘Songs of Innocence’ (1789). The merged title, ‘Songs of Innocence and Experience’, shows the two contrary stages of the human soul. They are in fact the most beautiful lyrics in English literature. The tyger offers a striking contrast to the lamb. The lamb is the symbol of innocence, meekness and gentle nature. The tyger, on the other hand represents the opposite qualities. It is difficult to believe that the same hand created them both. Blake himself is awe struck by the mystery of Creation and asks ‘Did he who made the lamb make thee?’

Hints for scaffolding questions
A close reading of the poem will help the learners to find out the answers for the scaffolding questions.
Poems

Understanding the poem

1. The reference here is to the fiery eyes and the bright yellow and black striped colours of the tiger. It also refers to the fierce of the soul like wrath, passion etc.

2. • Hammer, chain to suspend metal
   • Anvil to beat the metal into shape
   • Blacksmith’s smithy

3. Stars threw down their spears - ‘the stars’ refer to angels....

Watered heaven with tears - refers to the new dispensation of love and mercy when the coming of Christ to save Creation.

4. C.M Bowra says, 'The Tyger' is Blake's symbol of the fierce forces of the soul, which are needed to break the bonds of experience.

The tyger is a symbol of spiritual devote backed by uninhibited natural energy. It is the image of the Creator who, like Prometheus, works strenuously at his forge. Its deadly terrors must be that of the Creator. Thus, the Tyger is also like the Creator - the fearful symmetry, the dreadful fire in the eyes, the powerful heart and brain it. As a critic remarks, 'The Tyger is an image of the creator, its deadly terrors must be His.'

5. Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
   In the forests of the night; .........
   In what distant deeps or skies
   Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

6. It is the Creator who is highlighted.

7. Given in the table at the bottom of the page.

Writing about the poem

• Theme - The tyger, which is the symbol of destructive powers, is the very antithesis of the lamb.

• Tone - It reveals a mature outlook on life, shaped by experience - a tone that brings out the ferocity and destructive powers of the tyger. The innocence and meekness of the lamb is evident in the tone.

• Figures of speech - metaphor - 'distant deeps' - a common place metaphor for time and space in 18th century.

• Imagery - Conventional and easily understood.

• Style - Language and symbolism - elegant and simple.

• Verse forms - Simple as that of nursery rhymes - makes use of repetitions to stress the point for greater effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bright</th>
<th>skies</th>
<th>aspire</th>
<th>art</th>
<th>beat</th>
<th>chain</th>
<th>grasp</th>
<th>spears</th>
<th>see</th>
<th>bright</th>
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<tr>
<td>might</td>
<td>eyes</td>
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<td>heart</td>
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<td>brain</td>
<td>clasp</td>
<td>tears</td>
<td>thee</td>
<td>might</td>
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</table>
Appreciation of the poem 'The Lamb'

'The Lamb' is the most representative poem of Blake's first series of poems titled, 'Songs of Innocence'. In the poem the wonderful idea of a child's communion with nature. It is God who made the lamb and the child.

The lamb is an innocent creation of God and innocence is of divine origin. The lamb is Christ, the incarnation of love and tenderness. The lamb and the child are identified with Christ. They are one and the same. The lamb is the symbol of purity and innocence just like the child who tells the lamb - that both of them have been created by the same God.

The poet gives his vision of the world through the child who addresses the lamb and asks whether he knows who made him. He identifies their Creator as Christ who calls himself the Lamb of God. All three of them are called by the same name 'Lamb'.

According to Blake, innocence and experience are two contrary states of the human soul. Without contraries there can be no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate are all necessary to human experience. 'The Tyger' symbolises power employed for destructive purposes. So the tiger appears as the very antithesis of the lamb, the symbol of gentleness and innocence.

Table - Comparison

The table given for comparison can be easily completed by a close reading of the poems.

ICT Possibilities

The links provided in the text can be made use of as an entry activity. Later after attempting a detailed study of the poem 'The Tyger' and a comparison with 'The Lamb' a reinforcement of the poems can be made sure with the help of ICT.

T.E Questions

1. Prepare a critical appreciation of the poem 'The Tyger' by comparing it with 'The Lamb' by the same author. Hints: Theme, tone, figure of speech, contrast etc. (8 Score)

2. List out rhyming words from both the poems? How does it enhance the beauty of the poem? What is the rhyme scheme? (5 Score)

References:

http://www.william-blake.org/slide show.html

The Lamb by William Blake - YouTube


www.shmoop.com

www.re.umd.edu
To The Cuckoo

William Wordsworth

Concept
The mystic relationship between man and Nature.

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to
• understand the theme of the poem.
• recognise the literary beauty of the poem.
• enjoy the lyrical/musical quality of the song.
• identify poetic devices like metaphor, personification, alliteration, assonance, rhyming words, rhyme scheme, etc.

Materials
Picture of a cuckoo bird, a laptop and a projector

ICT
Audio text, Powerpoint slides, video clip of a flying cuckoo

Introduction
Wordsworth’s deep love for the ‘beautious forms’ of the natural world is characteristic of his poetry. He started composing verse since his days at Hawkshead Grammar School. His poetic career began with his first trip to France and Switzerland. He was intoxicated by the combination of revolutionary fervour he found in France and the impressive natural beauty of the countryside and mountains. He found something extraordinary in every ordinary thing in nature. No poet has ever admired and loved nature the way Wordsworth had. He still holds the prestigious position of the Nature Poet of English.

The cuckoo is migratory, and appears in England in the early spring. (refer: The Solitary Reaper) This poem was composed in the orchard at Town-End in 1802 and published in 1807. Wordsworth, in the Preface to the 1815 edition of the Lyrical Ballad, has the following note of the poem: “This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature of corporeal existence; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power, by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.”
**Poems**

**Summary**

While wandering in the valley the poet hears the sweet voice of a cuckoo. He feels delighted. The poet, in his extreme gladness addresses the bird as 'Blihe New-comer'. When the poet is lying on the grass he hears the song again. The 'cu-ckoo!' sound is echoed from valley to valley. Here the poet goes from the present to his boyhood days. To seek the bird he had tried so much everywhere, but it was of no use! The bird continues its invisibility. From a mere bird it grows through the status of 'a wandering voice', 'a mystery', a spirit without a body and eventually to the status of an angel. Thus the cuckoo comes to the poet as an ordinary bird and goes as an angel.

**Entry Activity**

The icon words are 'cuckoo', 'nature', and 'song'. The teacher may introduce any of these icon words to begin the class. The teacher can devise any creative opening such as:

- Showing different pictures of cuckoos.
- Audio tape of a cuckoo song.
- Video clip of a flying cuckoo, etc.
- Reciting, listening and enjoying the poem:
- Silent reading by all the learners.
- Loud reading by the learners.
- Playing the audio text.

The learners are asked to sing either the whole or part of the poem line by line along with the audio text or the teacher. Stop audio practising after the learners attain uniformity. Since this is a lyric, the learners should first be attracted to the musical effect. They should be able to enjoy the lyrical quality.

Now, the teacher presents a video clip of a flying cuckoo or a Powerpoint of a cuckoo and its natural setting.

Slowly, the learner returns from the world of sound to sight. Now, the first stanza can be recited once again and the learners may be asked to identify the features of the poem. Here, the teacher may introduce the terms 'LYRIC' and 'ODE' and explain them.

**Understanding the poem**

The poem begins with a note of welcome to the blithe Newcomer. The poet expresses his elated mood in many ways. 'Rejoice', 'wandering voice', 'darling of spring', 'a voice, a mystery', 'thou wert still a hope, a love' and 'O blessed bird' are a few of them. His enthusiasm to welcome the bird is evident in expressions like 'a thousand ways' and 'thrice welcome'. He deliberately uses the words 'golden time' to remind us of the golden qualities like divinity and innocence of a child. The archaic and contemporary words shuttle the readers between the past and the present. In the end the bird attains the glory of an angel. It fills the
world with peace and happiness. Thus the human world becomes a fairy place of extreme joy and music. Cuckoos like to dwell in that dreamland.

"To the Cuckoo" is an eight stanza poem with four lines in each. The stanzas are rhymed as abab. The poem is written in iambic tetra-meter and iambic tria-meter. The odd lines are iambic tetrameter while the even lines are iambic tri-meter. Its symbolism also deserves special attention. The bird, for the poet is Nature and an angel. It is also a symbol of Time. At the same time it is a vehicle to shuttle the poet between the past and the present. When the bird sings in the present, past and future it becomes an immortal symbol of unending joy and mystery.

In addition to this the teacher may ask the following questions also for a better understanding of the poem.

• The Cuckoo is more of a symbol than a bird. Why? What does it symbolise?

Beauty, innocence and childhood of the poet

• What is the relevance of the article 'the' in the title?

• "I have heard, I hear." Why does the poet use the main verb 'hear' in simple present and present perfect tense forms?

He heard it when he was a boy and he still hears it now.

• What is 'two-fold shout'?

a. Cu-ckoo!

b. The bird becomes a mere song. It loses its physical entity. That physical entity has so far been covered with a two-fold wrap-its two wings. Here 'fold' becomes metaphor. Moreover when the bird loses its physical existence, it just becomes a 'blithe spirit' - a beautiful example of personification.

c. The Cuckoo symbolises time. Cuckoos were used as clocks known as 'cuckoo clocks'. Many times does he use the time reference: 'Thy twofold shout I hear', 'thrice welcome', 'that golden time again'.

The unseen bird roaming all around is just a metaphor used to indicate and embody the idea of the 'uncatchable' time.

• The contrast of 'far-and-near' has effectively been used in many ways. Give two instances.

'hill to hill', 'at once far off and near', his present life and past childhood.

• On the whole, the poem can be enjoyed on the concept of 'dual contrast'. How?

The arrival of the bird brings the poet to his present self. When the bird goes away he is taken back to his childhood days. The bird has visited many times and has gone. Similarly the poet also is being shuttled between the past and the present.
Poems

- How far does this poem help to prove that Wordsworth is basically a nature poet?
- This poem employs many of Wordsworth’s well-known concepts, echoes many of his other poems and even some of his contemporaries. How?
- To the Cuckoo is more for a child than for an adult. Do you agree? Why?
- What is Romanticism? How far does the poem suit the concept of an ideal romantic poem?
- How many seasons are there in a year? In which order do they come? When does the bird appear?
- Suspense has its own beauty in the poem. What feature exemplifies this?

The bird has always been in his life as a source of happiness, inspiration and wonder. But still it has never ever appeared before his eyes. The song of the bird echoes all through his whole life. The poem must have lost its beauty if the bird had showed itself at least once before the poet!
- In many ways the cuckoo is similar to an angel in the sky. How does a mere bird add charm to the Wordsworthian world of fairies and supernaturals?
- Metaphor is the king of all figures of speech. How does metaphor rule the roost in the poem?

English Literature – Teacher Text

- What is the rhyme scheme and meter of the poem?
- Cite examples for rhyming words, alliteration and assonance.
- What is a lyric? What are the qualities of a lyric? How far is the present poem a successful lyric?

Writing about the poem

To the Cuckoo as a romantic poem

The poem 'To the Cuckoo' is the typical example of a romantic poem. The main element of a romantic poem lies in the choice of its subject matter. At a period when poets presented elevated themes of aristocratic life, romantic poets chose themes from the common life of the people. Another aspect is its subjective feelings. The boundless beauty of this poem resides within the boundaries of two beings, that of a poet and a bird. Again nature plays a vital role in romantic poems. Here all the elements are purely natural. Romantic poems give more importance to emotions or enjoyment than to facts and figures. It fills the mind of the reader with a temporal deep feeling and not everlasting thoughts or truths. Thus the poem is certainly a true romantic poem with all the order and odor of the romantic period.

- The bird as a symbol of the poet’s past and present.

The bird in the poem is at the same time both a symbol and a vehicle of the
poet's past and the present. While wandering in the valley one day, the poet hears the song of a cuckoo bird. It happens in the present. But the bird reminds him of his past when he used to chase the bird. Here the bird becomes a strong reason to go back to the golden days in the past. Another common element related to the bird is its invisible presence across the canvas of the poet's past and the present. Though the poet hears the bird in the past and the present, neither does he see it in the past nor in the present life.

C E Activity

Draw the picture of the four seasons in the proper order in which they appear.

Find out ten words each for rhyming words, alliteration and assonance and list them in a chart.

Make a collection of five poems on nature.

Write a poem on nature and read it out in the class.

TE Questions

Why does the poet call the bird a 'newcomer'?

Why does the poet call the bird 'darling of the spring'?

What are the elements of nature poetry in 'To the Cuckoo'?

References

www.eliteskill.com
www.preservearticles.com
www.prezi.com
eretzsongs.blogspot.com
My Last Duchess

Robert Browning

Concept
Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' uses the technique of dramatic monologue ironically to reveal the warped passions and prejudices of the patriarchal society.

Learning Outcomes
The learner will be able to:

• explain how the language, form and structure of the poem reveal the Duke's intentions.

• infer information about the character using evidence from the text and sketch their traits.

• explore how the theme of conflict is presented in the poem.

• appreciate the poem from different viewpoints and present the ideas coherently and logically.

Materials
• Movie clippings, audio-visual aids

ICT
The link provided in the textbook can be used to watch the presentation of the poem.

Word processor software or presentation software can be used to design quiz/ guessing the miming word/ recording jumbled lines etc.

Introduction
The poem 'My Last Duchess' by Robert Browning written in iambic pentameter couplet throws light on the juxtaposition of the two entities - the perverted, egoistic, materialistic, abnormal and arrogant Duke with the normal and innocent Duchess.

Summary
Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' is a dramatic monologue spoken by an Italian Duke, the Duke of Ferrara. He was entertaining a messenger from a wealthy court. The messenger came to negotiate the Duke's marriage with the Count's daughter. The Duke calmly related to the messenger, that he had disposed his previous wife as she had offended his vanity.

Entry Activity
The teacher may ask some triggering questions like:

• Why are certain people intimate to us?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poems</th>
<th>English Literature – Teacher Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We find that we think on the same lines as our intimate friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher shows a clipping - a quarrel/conflict scene from a movie.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What happens if our minds are not identical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow the process of reading.

**Hints for scaffolding questions**

You may go through the text and find out the answers for the scaffolding questions given.

**Understanding the poem**

Questions 1-4 - refer the textbook.

5. The Duke might be thinking of some other options - to divorce her or send her to a convent where she would remain silent.

6. In the Duke's eyes, she had offended him.

• She had smiled at people
• She thanked men for doing her favours, like picking a sprig of cherries for her.
• She blushed when Fra Pandolf praised her beauty.

But no, she was innocent. She was allowed to have no life outside of her husband's wishes.

7. The Duke belonged to the Renaissance period.

• Renaissance began in Italy- Centre of the old Roman Empire.
• The Dukes and Princes of the time longed to return to their old glory.
• So the Duke's title can be traced to old Roman aristocracy.
• His pride is in his wealthy family name. He expects to value the title more.

8. • Blushed at the painter's compliment.
• Smiled at people.
• Thanked men for favours like picking a sprig of cherries for her.

**Writing about the poem**

1. My Last Duchess as a dramatic monologue.

• We are introduced to the Duke - told of his persona - introduced to his lovely wife - told the reason for his jealousy - as are features of dramatic monologue - presence of a single speaker, listener, symbolic setting, dramatic gestures, focus on dramasics, persona reveals or betrays something of his own narration.

Monologue reveals - psychology of the speaker, his lust for power, money and control.

The poem is dramatic and is a monologue.
2. Last Duchess means previous - also means 'last' in a long line of previous wives.

Late Duchess implies that the Duke's previous wife is no more.

But the question remains - Is she dead or not? The poem doesn't actually say so.

3. A statement by Her Highness the last Duchess of Ferrara.

I am most unhappy to confess on my husband's deplorable insinuation regarding my character. His lies have been believed as his words about me are convincing. Now I am only 13. He married me so that he would be able to mould me in his way.

Our clothing had to conform to certain norms. My dress was always high collared to hide the neck. Sleeves covered the wrists and skirt reached to the floor. No part of my body was exposed other than my face and palms.

As suggested by my husband Brother Pandolf a monk and an amazing artist came to paint a portrait of me. I had no affair with him as my husband or my ladies - in - waiting were there always. Pandolf's comment that it was such a pity he could not see a touch of my throat or my wrists made me blush. When my husband noticed that he was angry. He said that it was not proper of me to have blushed then. Another time in the garden a servant picked a sprig of cherries for me and I thanked him and smiled at him. The Duke was insanely jealous of me.

He treated me as an object. He had a statue of Neptune taming a sea-horse. He saw me as that carefree sea-horse. So my husband was determined to tame and destroy me.

I can assure you that my husband never loved me. He loved only money and power. He always blamed me and wanted to dispose me off. I am afraid that he even planned to end the marriage somehow.

C E Activities

Collect a dramatic monologue by any one of the famous writers and pick out the characteristic features of the dramatic monologue as presented in the poem.

Collect famous dramatic monologues of different periods/ages.

T E Questions

1. How does Browning reveal the characters in 'My Last Duchess'?
2. What is the role of women in the poem?
3. Explain the way Browning presents and develops the Duke's feelings and desires in 'My Last Duchess'?
4. How are relationships presented in Browning's 'My Last Duchess'?
5. Why does the Duke pause to point at the statue of Neptune?

6. Do you believe the speaker murdered his last Duchess? Explain your answer.

7. Fill the table below by focusing on what the poem suggests about the Duke’s relationship with his wife and his own character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Duke’s description of the Duchess</th>
<th>What does this tell us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“She had a heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She liked whate’er she looked on and her looks went everywhere”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She smiled, no doubt whene’er I passed her, but who passed without much the same smile”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reference**

https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/my-last-duchess
www.shmoop.com>poetry
www.tes.co.uk
www.bartleby.com
www.gradesaver.com

****
I had gone a-Begging

Rabindranath Tagore

Concept

• Verse 50 of 'Gitanjali' as a romantic lyric and allegory.

• Importance of complete submission for the ultimate realization of God

Learning outcomes

The learner is able to:

• read and discuss the theme of the poem.

• identify and list the literary devices employed.

• appraise the aesthetic elements.

• describe the features of an allegory.

• compare similar poems.

• prepare profiles.

Materials

Audio visual aids

ICT

Audio text of the poem.

Video presentation of the poem.

Introduction

'Gitanjali' which means 'an offering of songs' is a collection of inspirational poems written in Bengali and was translated to English by Tagore himself. In fact, it was his first attempt at translation. Tagore was known only in the Calcutta circles till he was 51. In 1912 he undertook a sea voyage to England. He started translating his latest selection of poems himself to occupy during the journey. Upon reaching England, he lost the suitcase in which he had kept the translation. Luckily, it was recovered the next day. Tagore’s friend and famous artist Rothenstein happened to see these translations. He was overwhelmed by the incredible beauty of the poems. He persuaded W.B. Yeats to have a look at the poems. Yeats was enthralled and even wrote the preface to Gitanjali. 'Gitanjali' created an instant sensation as it gave a glimpse of the mysticism and the sentimental beauty of Indian culture. In less than a year, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize. In 1915 he was knighted by King George V, but he renounced it in 1919 after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
Poems

Summary

Verse 50 of 'Gitanjali' is celebrated for its simplicity and openness. The poem reminds us of W.B. Yeats' comment, "Tagore's poetry stirred my blood as nothing has for years." Like all other poems in the collection, this song also nourishes the soul and elevates the reader to the highest peak of devotion.

The poem depicts an unusual meeting between a beggar and the 'King of Kings'. The sight of the king fills the beggar with hope and he thinks that his evil days are over. But to his surprise, the king holds out his hand to the beggar and asks for alms. The confused man gives him the least little grain in his wallet. That night he finds a least little grain of gold in his bag. The beggar realizes his mistake and repents his stinginess. The poem ends with the poor man's guilty cry that he should have given his all to the king.

The poem is an allegory where the beggar is the poet and the 'King of Kings' is God.

Entry activity

Ask the learners to write one sentence each on their perception of God. Let them present the ideas before the class. Then, ask them to rewrite these ideas in the form of a short poem (two to five lines) in groups.

After the presentation by the learners, ask them to name any devotional poet from India. Give them enough hints to lead them to Tagore and Gitanjali.

(Hints: lived during our Independence struggle - was a great educationist - first Indian to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature etc.)

Hints for scaffolding questions

1. begging from door to door
2. The king, riding a golden chariot, entered like a gorgeous dream
3. alms given unasked and wealth scattered on all sides
4. The king begging for alms to a beggar seems a joke
5. the least little grain of corn
6. in repentance
7. He found a little grain of gold in his bag.
8. God and the poet

Understanding the poem

1. The beggar - waiting for alms, hopeful, confused, undecided, surprised, bitterly weeping.
   The King - riding a golden chariot, gorgeous dream, making jests.
2. The poet is represented as the beggar and the king as God. It is a depiction of the poet's realization of God.
3. Only ultimate devotion and submission will be rewarded.
Poems

4. Refer lines 10, 11 & 14. They create an atmosphere of pure devotion by taking the reader to the olden days.

5. gorgeous dream, least little grain of corn, least little grain of gold

6. Simile

Writing about the poem

1. The religious nature of the theme and moral tone- many elements representing something else- aim to instill morals and faith- symbolic nature of characters- fantasy elements

C E Activities

1. Prepare profile of five Indian poets.

2. Collect any two allegorical poems.

3. Prepare a visual presentation of the poem.

T E Questions

1. Write an appreciation of Verse 50 of ‘Gitanjali’.

English Literature – Teacher Text

2. Write a paragraph on the devotional element in the poem.

3. Narrate the meeting between the beggar and the king.

4. Rewrite the poem in the form of a conversation between the beggar and the king.

5. Imagine that the beggar makes a diary entry in the night. Prepare the diary entry.

References

Bichitra online- Tagore Variorum
Tagore Poetry - Sri Chinmoy
Tagore and His India- Amartya Sen
Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad Minded Man- Dutta K and Robinson
A Tagore Reader- Beacon Press
The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore - Atlantic Publishing
The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore
Bangle Sellers

Sarojini Naidu

**Concept**
Role of women in Indian society.
Glorification of Indian women.
Voice of the voiceless.

**Learning outcomes**
The learner will be able to:

- understand the features of a lyric.
- understand various features like theme, imagery, mood, rhyme scheme, symbolic elements, use of figures of speech like metaphor, simile, etc.
- appreciate the beauty of the poem.
- read and recite poems of the similar as well as different themes.
- prepare reviews and comparative studies of poems.
- attempt creative writing of poems.
- imbibe the greatness of motherhood in the Indian context.

**ICT**
Collection of similar lyrics by Sarojini Naidu.
Audio text of the poem.
Video clippings of temple fairs, bangles and bangle-wearing ceremonies.

**Introduction**
Being a staunch admirer of the unpretentious life in India, Sarojini Naidu was able to compose poetry in accordance with native versions of rhyme and meter. She began writing right from her childhood. Impressed with her works, the Nizam of Hyderabad granted her a scholarship to study overseas. At the age of 16, she got an admission in the King’s College of England, where she met the famous English writer Edmund Gosse, who asked her to write on Indian themes. Thereafter her poetry became purely Indian, a portrait gallery of Indian life and characters.

In ‘Bangle Sellers’ Sarojini Naidu presents the folk custom of the bangle-wearing ceremony, which very well becomes a poetic equivalent of a woman’s growth from the status of a
daughter to a wife and then to a mother. Even though ‘bangle’ is a common subject matter, Sarojini Naidu has woven a rich pattern of philosophy to an Indian woman’s life cycle.

Sarojini Naidu was an active participant in India’s struggle for freedom. She was a revolutionary who broke out of traditional and nominative roles of women. She affirmed that India cannot be free unless she spoke for women. In 'Bangle Sellers' the poet is trying to give voice to a group of poor marginalised women. The poem is exposed to the traditional and social value of the role of women in Indian society. She has interpreted the values and virtues of Indian womanhood with the help of different colours and a variety of bangles in the poem.

**Summary**

The poem beautifully presents the picture of bangle sellers roaming through streets, delighting the hearts of women. The poem is centered around the perspective of some nomadic bangle sellers who carry their 'shining loads' (bangles) to the temple fair for a bigger sale. Women usually buy bangles from temple fairs and such are occasions of happiness. They invite people to come and buy the delicate, bright and multi-coloured bangles which are tokens of delight for 'happy daughters and happy wives'.

The poet interweaves colour symbolism into the various stages of the life of a woman. Silver and blue coloured bangles are suitable for a graceful and innocent maiden. These are like the mist on the mountains. Some bangles are 'flushed like dreaming buds on the tranquil bows of woodland stream'. Some others glow like the flowers in the new-born leaves. By using similes the poet glorifies the tingling beauty of the bangles.

The third stanza gives a colourful description of the bangles suitable for a bride on her bridal morning. Bangles having the colour of sunlit corn field(yellow) and that of the flame of her marriage fire(red) are apt on her wedding day. Some are rich with colours of her heart's desire. The phrase bridal laughter and bridal tear suggests the emotional feelings of a bride.

The fourth stanza throws light on the transformation of a bride to a responsible and dutiful wife and mother. A middle aged woman prefers bangles which are purple in colour and touched with gold and grey colours. She has mothered her children and remains busy with her domestic chores. Sitting by her husband's side, she worships Gods for the well-being of her dearest and nearest ones.
Entry Activity

- Have you seen a village fair/festival?
- What are the sights you enjoy seeing there?
- Do you like to buy things or have you watched women buying fancy items at the fair?
- What are the fancy things they buy or prefer to buy?
- Have you seen different types of bangles there?

Hints for scaffolding questions

Stanza 1

- Bangle sellers speak in the poem.
- shining loads - metaphor denoting the shining loads of bangles
- temple fair - religious and happy occasions
- various ways in which bangles are described
- shining loads, delicate, bright, rainbow-tinted circles of light
- rainbow-tinted circles of light - the multi-coloured bangles
- lustrous tokens - bangles
- radiant lives - happy lives
- happy daughters and happy wives - To be happy is the real aim of an Indian woman's life.

Stanza 2

- bangles for maidens - silver and blue in colour
- buds dream on the tranquil banks of woodland stream. They dream of their blooming.
- The flowers cleave in the glorious leaves that are recently born.
- Examples of similes
  - 'silver and blue as mountain mist'
  - 'flushed like the buds'

Stanza 3

- 'fields of sunlit corn' - yellow coloured
- 'bangles suitable for a bride' - yellow and red
- 'flame of her marriage fire' - red coloured
- 'hue of her heart's desire' - coloured bangles which match the wish of a bride
- 'bridal laughter and bridal tear' - bride is happy to get married but sad to leave her parental home.

Stanza 4

- bangles suitable for a middle-aged woman - purple and gold flecked grey
- 'journeyed through life midway' - spent half of life (middle-aged)
- different roles of a middle-aged woman
- cherished - giving tender care
- blest - bestowing of love
Poems
- cradled - bringing up children with care and affection
- serves- attending the household duties
- worships-offering prayers with husband

Extended Reading

History of Bangle Wearing in India

The festival of Sankranti is one such occasion when bangles are worn as a ritual. It is said that medieval India included bangles in various customs and gave the ornament a ritualistic significance. It is coloured bangles that are deemed to be more propitious than the gold or silver ones. Green and red glass bangles are auspicious for married women. In Maharashtra, women wear these on all important and special occasions in the family. As a matter of fact, pregnant women are given green glass bangles to wear on both their arms. In Northern India and in the South, red assumes ritualistic relevance. In Bengal, married women wear red and white bangles.

Bangles are vital not just during weddings, but also on the occasion of baby shower, which in the Indian context can be referred to as the bangle ceremony. It is believed to be an event held to ward off evil spirits that might be lurking around the mother-to-be or the baby in the womb. The only time that a married woman removes her bangles is either at labour, while having a baby or when she is widowed.

English Literature – Teacher Text

Social Background

According to Sarojini Naidu, an ideal woman must be faithful to her family by looking after children and being religious. (4th stanza)

• Stages of womanhood skilfully linked with the bangles.

• Three stages-
  1. maiden
  2. bride
  3. middle aged woman

Feministic Explanation

The vital roles assigned to a woman / cherished / blest / cradled / serves / worships.

Understanding the poem

1. Bangles- tokens of happy, colourful, devoted life
   - to be happy is the real goal of Indian woman

   - circles of light - fulfillment of woman's life

2. 'Circle of light' - Bangles are shining circles (the life circle of woman)
   - 'fields of sunlit corn' - yellow colour

3. Wedding - religious/fulfils heart's desire
   - Colour of bangles - yellow and red

   - bright bangles - symbols of cheerful married life
Poems

4. a. maiden - Uses silver and blue bangles
   - blooming beauty of glowing age
   - freshness of life
b. bride - Uses yellow and red bangles
   - desires a new happy married life
   - bright colour - bright side of life
c. mother - uses purple and gold flecked grey
   - faithful to husband and family
   - sacrifice /purity/ service
   - ultimate goal - spiritual truth.

5. - fusion and growth of feminine personality (social and psychic growth)
   - growth from the status of a blooming, carefree maiden to a wife and from that
to a dutiful mother

6. aa bb cc dd / gives melodic flow
7. 't' in 'bloom that cleaves'

Writing about the poem

1. • three phases of Indian womanhood
   • bangles as symbols/colour symbolism
   • religious and social functions
   • tone and mood - innocent/ cheerful/ happy/ fanciful/ dreamy/ hopeful/ jubilant/ dutiful/ loving/ proud.
   • alliteration/ imagery/ similes/ metaphors/ rhyme scheme/ structure
2. • glorification of Indian womanhood
   • three faces of Indian women
   • maiden/blooming beauty/colourful/ free

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of life</th>
<th>Colour of bangles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maiden</td>
<td>silver, ............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bride</td>
<td>...................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English Literature - Teacher Text

• bride/ desires/fulfils heart's wishes
• mother/ duties and responsibilities/ embodiment of love, purity, sacrifice, service, devotion
• changes in the perspectives

Circle of light - fulfillment of life

C E Activities

1. Bangle Sellers as an example of a fine lyric.

2. Compare and contrast this poem with Sarojini Naidu's 'Indian Weavers' and find out the importance of symbolism in her poems.

3. Compose a lyric of a similar theme.

T E Questions

1. Complete the table given below by selecting appropriate words from the poem. Comment on the various stages of a woman’s life and the colour of bangles used by them.

2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

3. ‘An Indian woman is the embodiment of selflessness.' Discuss


References

www.kiddingtown.com
allpoetry.com/The Bangle Sellers
www. enotes.com
www.slideshare.net
The Highway Man

Alfred Noyes

Concept
Ballad as a literary form

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to
- read and comprehend the theme of the ballad.
- analyse and find out the features of a ballad including, rhyme, sound devices, narration, repetition, figures of speech, imagery etc.
- recognize how the form and structure shape the meaning of the text
- explain the diverse poetic devices and strategies used
- gain proficiency in the use of appropriate technologies to explore literature
- gain human values and understand the need to be sympathetic
- develop an attitude against violence

Materials
- Textbook
- Activity note book
- Audio-visual aids-hyperlinked text and audio presentation of ballads

Entry Activity
The entry to the lesson can be made by the teacher using audio-visual aids. The learners can listen to a few ballads including those of their regional language and identify the common features of ballads.

Introduction
Alfred Noyes was a poet, playwright, novelist and anthologist. Educated at Oxford, which he left without taking a degree, he was a lecturer in Harvard and Princeton Universities. Although Alfred Noyes belongs to the late Victorian or Modern period, he was a strong advocate of Romanticism. He was an opponent of the modernist movement as represented by T.S. Eliot and others.

The Highway Man is one of Noyes' most popular ballads which is a splendid example of a modern ballad. It is rich with excitement and action and at the same time, enriched with the beauty of word pictures which we come
across in the best lyrical poetry. This ballad narrates a story which depicts a girl's sacrifice of her life for love’s sake. Although the hero is a Highwayman or a bandit, the poem arouses our sympathy and admiration for their devotion and courage. The poem is full of romance, adventure, action and excitement that is typical of a ballad. (refer Glossary for ballad)

**Understanding the poem**

1. In the first stanza of the ‘The Highway Man’ Noyes describes a situation that fills us with horror and a sense of adventure. Three metaphors are used by the poet. First he compares the wind to a "torrent of darkness". The moon a ghostly galleon is almost like a character in the story. The road is another metaphor that is used as a main focus. The atmosphere appears ghostly and scary. The road looks lonely and dark. The light of the moon flashing on the road gives it the look of a long ribbon. The dark night and the lonely highway creates a mood of horror and adventure.

2. **Refrain** - Refer Glossary.

The highway man came riding
Riding, riding

Stanza III is repeated in Stanza IX with a change in tense to bring about a dramatic effect to the ballad which narrates a thrilling adventure in ghostly atmosphere.

3. **Onomatopoeia** - (refer Glossary)

Tlot-Tlot, Tlot-Tlot

**Alliteration** - (refer Glossary)

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.

And he tapped with his whip on the shutters but all was locked and barred.

4. **Simile** (refer Glossary)

**Hints for scaffolding questions**

A close reading of the text will help the learners answer the while reading or scaffolding questions provided along with text.

**Understanding the poem**

The teacher can make use of the glossary to scaffold the learners to answer the questions provided for understanding the poem.

**Writing about the poem**

1. The close reading of the text will help the learners to complete the web provided in the text. They may be encouraged to do a similar web to identify the features of Bess. This may be done as a group activity. Then they may individually write down the character sketches of both. The learners share their written work, modify them and present in the class. The best can be selected after presentation and the others can be refined with the help of
the teacher. (There is ample scope for teacher and peer assessment here.)

2. The following hints can be given by the teacher for the critical appreciation of the poem as a literary ballad.

Poetic - theme - tone - mood - poetic devices This can be done as a group activity in which all the learners share their views. Later individual critical appreciation of the poem done by the learners can be evaluated by the teacher and this product be made a part of the portfolio.

CE Activity

This session can be used as an effective tool for continuous evaluation where the teacher can make an assessment of the different skills and understanding level of the students.

TE Questions

1. “The Highway Man” by Alfred Noyes gives excellent word pictures portraying the central characters of the story in the ballad. ‘Bess with dark eyes’, ‘hair like black cascade’, ‘red lips’…

The Highway Man, a gallant rider with French-cocked hat on his forehead, boots up to the thigh. Attempt character sketches of these two characters in not more than a page.

2. Give an instance of onomatopoeia used in Alfred Noyes’ ballad ‘The Highway Man’. How does it enhance the beauty of the poem?

3. The lovers in the ballad ‘The Highway Man’ had a tragic end. How? What are your comments on it?

References

Harold Bloom - Poetic Influence
Hugh Kenner - Imagism
The Highway by Alfred Noyes - YouTube
en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/The Highway Man (poem)
www.youtube.com|
www.the other pages.org

****
Never Again Would Bird's Song Be the Same

Robert Frost

Concept
Imprinting consciousness into nature
Highlighting the power of eloquence

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to:
• read and appreciate the poem
• prepare a review of the poem
• familiarize the sonnet as a poetic form
• visualize the life of the first couple in Garden of Eden

Materials
Video clips, Bible stories

ICT
Video clipping on YouTube

Introduction
'Never again Would Bird's Song be the same' is a sonnet. It is in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet. (Sonnet: A poem which consists of 14 iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. Shakespearean sonnet consists of 3 quatrains and a couplet having the rhyme scheme - abab cdcd efef gg. Also, the poem is a curious mixture of apparently unrelated motive and effects. Even though, it is a pleasant poem, both linguistic and poetic.

Summary
The background of the poem is set in the Garden of Eden where we see the first couple Adam and Eve spending a short term in their life. At the beginning of the poem, Adam (‘He’) who had arrived earlier in the garden is listening to Eve and notices that her arrival had an effect on the birds. Having heard 'the daylong voice of Eve', they had added an 'over sound' to their own.

It was her soft eloquence, calls and laughter which are the carriers of her wordless 'tones of meaning' that became a part of their song. The soft, perhaps erotic sound were daylong and were in concert with the bird's songs. The melody of the song reached out to all the birds in the garden. Towards the end of the poem, we find the background changing to woods.
Adam is presented as the author of a myth about the human appropriation of nature. It is the beginning of a complete awareness of nature. Eve is not at all a woman alone. She is a part of humanity. The tone of the poem is of a speaker who is now here with us and of our time and destiny. There is a resemblance between the fallen and the unfallen world, between the first parents and us and between the birds and Eve.

**Entry Activity**

The story of Adam and Eve - visualizing their life in the Garden of Eden by telling the story by video presentation

Influence of nature in the life of man

**Hints for scaffolding questions**

1. 'daylong'
2. Garden of Eden.
3. influenced by Eve's voice they added their own.
4. 'Had now persisted in the woods so long,'
5. To beautify the song of birds/nature by the influence of herself/human beings

**Understanding the poem**

1. Sweet and soft voices of Eve are harmonious with the song of the birds' sounds in nature.

2. Bird's song is beautiful, but meaningless. Eve's speech is the 'tone of meaning without words'.

3. Adam. He is an observer of the garden and the poet is speaking for Adam.

4. Being with the other sound and having a prominent quality.

5. Eloquent and having a prominence above the bird's voice.

6. Eve represent not only a single biblical character. As a part of the humanity, the influence of a woman in every man is mentioned. This makes the life of man worse, sometimes better.

7. Yes, women are closer to nature than men. Eve produces her 'tone of meaning' with the bird's song. Adam is only an observer.

8. Like birds, Eve (women as a whole) loves liberty.

9. Allusion-Eve represents womanhood. The fall of man due to the influence of woman is symbolic.

10. abab cdc eef gg

**Writing about the poem**

1. If Adam were at the centre of the poem the beauty and harmony of the sounds of birds and Eve may not have happened. Women are closer to nature. Eve finds time to spend with nature's sounds and she was thrilled, her daylong
voice, call or laughter persisted in the woods so long.

Women are more anxious about the forthcoming dangers and they may take precautions necessary or unnecessary. This anxiety makes them protectors of nature and we can see women leaders in the movements for environment conservation.

**C E Activities**

1. Collect five famous poems by Robert Frost

2. Make a study of Frosts' style of poems, which 'begins in delight and ends in wisdom'.

3. Influence of nature and ordinary life in Frost's poems.

4. 'Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another.' Discuss this comment of Frost on the basis of this poem.

**TE Questions**

1. Prepare a review of the poem.

2. Myth of Adam and Eve is pictured with another dimension in the poem. Examine.

3. The special nature of womanhood leads to the fall of man. Attempt a critical appreciation.

**References**


Robert Frost: *The Work of Knowing*. Copyright © 1977 OUP.

Elegy for Jane

Theodore Roethke

Concept

• Glorification of a deceased dame in terms of beautiful elements in nature

Learning outcomes

The learner will be able to:

• recognise the elegiac elements in the poem
• empathise with the agony of a weeping heart
• identify elements of free verse
• enjoy the beauty of romantic elements
• distinguish between various poetic devices
• construct a critical appreciation of the poem

Materials

Picture of a tomb stone, projector and laptop

ICT

Audio tape/video clip of the poem from YouTube

Introduction

Theodore Huebner Roethke is regarded as one among the ten great 20th century American poets. His admiration for the works of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Blake and Wordsworth seems to have left a lasting impression on him, for his works are characterized by their introspection, rhythm and natural imagery. What is noticeable in all his verses is the depiction of the natural world in all its mystery, beauty, fierceness and sensuality, and hence, his verses abound in intense lyricism.

‘Elegy for Jane’ was published as part of Roethke's book ‘The Waking’ in 1953. The book went on to win the Pulitzer Prize and help cement Roethke's place in the twentieth-century poetry canon. ‘Elegy for Jane’ is one of his most anthologized poems and is a great example of the natural imagery that Roethke is famous for. He used nature to explore everything from relationships to the subconscious.

This elegy is a sad tale of a teacher's emotional response to the untimely demise of one of his students, Jane, who was thrown off a horse.
Summary

A college student falls off her horse and is killed. Soon after her funeral, her former professor stands at her graveside and declares his love for her.

The professor's love for his student is not romantic. In fact, he does not really know the student Jane all that well. But her untimely death forces the professor to consider mortality and the fleeting nature of life. He loves what Jane represents. He loves her youthful vigour and curiosity, her vulnerability, qualities that he sees and loves in the natural world around him. Jane's death makes him acutely aware of the fact that like Jane, everything will come to an end.

Entry activity

The teacher may show the picture of a tombstone and ask the learners to say a few words they feel while looking at the picture. From their responses the teacher may emphasise the pain of loss. Then the teacher may introduce elegy, the poetic form that deals with the demise of someone close to the poet.

Form and style of the poem

This poem is in the form of an elegy. Still the poet has deviated from the traditional stanzaic form and meter to deal with a contemporary topic. Some of the general features of an elegy are that they are subjective in approach and deals with an intense emotion at some point of time in the life of the protagonist. In this kind of poetry the protagonist laments the death of somebody close to his heart. The poet uses all the possible images from nature abundantly to prove both his affection and attachment to the deceased and the innocence and greatness of the dead. It again proceeds in a pensive and reminiscent mood and ends with a note of hope and philosophic understanding. Apart from the metrical standards the poem is certainly an elegy in every respect.

Hints for scaffolding questions

1. Neckcurls, limp and damp as tendrils, quick look, sidelong pickerel smile, the light syllables leaping from her mouth.

2. The girl's happiness is balanced and is equated to a happy wren that waves its tail in the wind while singing. Her song even shakes the twigs and small branches. The very stirs and whispers of each and every leaf and flower partake in the symbolic representation of both the inner and outer joy of the girl.

3. A father understands his daughter well most often; but not always. This line hints itself that the girl is not only a daughter to the fatherly affections of a teacher but much more than that, strange and unnatural.

4. The bird sparrow

5. Spiny shadow, wet stone, moss, wound with the last night

6. The poet wishes to bring the girl back to life.
7. In the eyes of the society he is just a teacher and not her close relation like father or lover.

**Understanding the poem**

The poem is an elegy. It bears almost all qualities of an elegy. The protagonist laments the death of his dear student. He is sad, pensive, retrospective and in the end philosophic, the usual procedure of an elegy. The poet resorts to all possible images to reveal his student's angelic appeal as is seen in 'sidelong pickerkel smile.' The effective use of bird imagery (wren, sparrow and pigeon) makes the girl more angelic and innocent. Though the poet deviates a bit from the traditional nature of strictly adhering to the stanzaic and metrical structure of an elegy the deviation is quite intelligent as it adds more charm and reality to the contemporary topic. Experiences like 'quick look' add to the musical quality of the poem. At the same time, such words remind us of the briskness of the girl which is a characteristic of the wren or the sparrow. The setting of the poem in a graveyard befits the damp, bleak sombre mood of the poem. The atmosphere is still and sad. Even though the teacher is not her father or lover or any other close relation, he still wishes her back to life. Thus the poem ends with a note of philosophical reconciliation.

**Writing about the poem**

1. The main motif of the poem is its ability to generate or bring back sympathy and empathy that we are losing these days. Unusually in the poem the lamentor is a teacher and the untimely death is that of a student. The poem teaches us that the oft-noticed world of a teacher-student relation also has life and power. This general treatment of a still general subject matter is highly influential in a world that finds sympathy not even in the death of one's own daughter or mother.

2. Free responses can be encouraged and appreciated.

**Appreciation**

Theme: A teacher lamenting the untimely death of his student. Contradictory to the general approach of selecting elevated themes, the poet chooses an ordinary, simple, unnoticed theme for his poem. In this respect he is more with Gray than with other masters who have attempted elegy.

Tone: Melancholic and philosophic as is seen in most elegies. An elegy laments throughout the poem resorting to all images associated with the deceased one. It starts from bitter agony and proceeds through disappointment, dejection to the present world and life, pensive look and outlook, philosophy and finally comes to a made up logical agreement. In the present poem also the lamentor goes through all these stages.
Poetic devices: Though the poem is more in the form of free verse it retains some of the classical features of poetry in general and elegy in specific. Alliteration is one such. Many of the lines end in beautiful alliterative combinations in the same lines themselves. Example: 'limp and damp', 'pickerel smile', 'light syllables leaped', 'delight thought', 'tail into the wind'.

Another device is the intelligent use of similes (damp as tendrils, waiting like a fern). Metaphor, the king of all poetic devices, is the life spirit of this poem. In fact almost all combinations are beautiful metaphors in this poem. (pickerel smile, whisper of leaves, bleached valleys, etc.) Apart from this, occasional use of other figures of speech like personification and assonance also enrich the beauty of the poem.

Extended Reading

‘Elegy written in a Country Churchyard’ by Thomas Gray

C E Activities

1. Write a similar poem.
2. A project on elegies in English literature.
3. Performance based activity - Imagine that the girl comes back to the lamenting teacher in his dream. Construct a conversation between them.

T E Questions

1. Write a paragraph on the poet's skilful use of a bird in its natural habitat to unveil all the natural and angelic qualities of the student.
2. What kind of attachment do you think the teacher has towards his dear student?
3. How does the poem end?
4. Write a character sketch of the teacher as revealed in the poem.

Reference

www.shmoop.com
www.humanities360.com
www.awaw.com/Roethke/ poems/ 98.html
Kennedy, X.J An Introduction to poetry
Oppression

Langston Hughes

Concept
The agony of oppression and longing for freedom

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to:
• understand the theme of the poem.
• recognise the pain of discrimination.
• enjoy the effect of free verse.

Materials
• Picture of a boy with a sticker over his mouth.
• Picture of shackles or handcuff.
• Picture or movie clip on slavery.

ICT
‘Oppression’ by Langston Hughes - Poetry reading - YouTube

Introduction
Langston Hughes is one of the few great and strong advocates of the emancipation of the blacks from the racial discrimination in a white dominated society. One can even presume that it is Hughes himself speaking. He believes in the authenticity of his beliefs and the idea that change is possible. The first stanza articulates how reality is constructed to deny the possibility of dreams that liberate and allow individual freedom. The emotional frame of reference is undeniable in the second stanza when the speaker clearly envisions a world that is entirely different from what its current situation is.

Summary
The poet becomes the voice of the voiceless in the poem. He begins the poem reminding us of a dangerous and pathetic situation where the blacks are denied the right to dream and sing. Some parts of the world still retain the discrimination among the classes. Their ignorance and carelessness just add fuel to the prevalence of oppression. But he dreams of a better tomorrow. His ardent optimism assures him that the singer will get his voice back and dreams will materialise in the future. Thus the poem ends in an optimistic note.

OR
The poem begins with a note of disappointment. He complains that till then the dreamers were denied of their right to dream. The singers also are not permitted to sing. Dreams and songs are symbols of hope and happiness. The blacks are denied all the pleasures of life. Though a change has already started in some parts of the world, light has yet to come over a vast area. But the poet is optimistic. He thinks "dark nights and cold steel" can hold the world no longer. Some day the dream and the song will definitely come to rescue the black from darkness and silence.

**Entry Activity**

The teacher may show the picture of a boy with a sticker over his mouth so that he cannot speak/project a movie clip/picture of slavery. Showing this the teacher may ask: 'What will you feel if you are denied of your voice?' The students may express their dissatisfaction and disapproval through different responses.

**Hints for scaffolding questions**

You may go through the text to find out answers for the questions.

**Understanding the poem**

The poem begins with a note of dissatisfaction. Though the title does not appear anywhere in the poem, the unseen presence of it is evident throughout the poem. The unseen dictator's oppression denies the right to sing and dream. The oppression is globally seen in some lands of dark nights and cold steel. Here the two images-'night' and 'steel'- are the dirty aristocratic minds of the white, metaphorically painted with two strong adjectives-'dark' and 'cold'. There is no light of knowledge or love in their minds. Instead they are rigidly callous and careless. Still the poet is optimistic about the future. He is sure that the right to laugh and the desire to dream will be given back to them. Then the song will break the jail. This paradoxical ending ignites a string of thoughts in the revolutionary minds of the readers. In fact a mere song cannot break a jail. But when the song assumes the universal power of peace it can break any jail of restrictions. Here the song stands for the path of peace and 'jail' stands for the unseen shackles thrust up on them. The poet is optimistic as he is sure that the path of peace would defeat dictatorship and oppression ultimately.

**Writing about the poem**

Comparison of two poems - 'Oppression' and 'Harlem (Dream Deferred)'

'A desire to resist oppression is implanted in the nature of man.'-Tacitus. The poems 'Oppression' and 'Harlem (Dream Deferred)' of Hughes
Poems

express almost the same theme - dejection of the socially discriminated people. In 'Oppression', though dreams are denied at the beginning, his optimism hopes to restore them. But in the second poem, he is more pungent and anxious where little hope is left for a positive reinstate and redemption. Moreover, when 'Oppression' looks at dream from the colour of optimism, 'Harlem' associated it with the stained and hopeless feelings of a loser! Thus the two poems deal with the same theme, that of the agony of the denied. Still they look at the issue from two different angles - that of hope and dejection.

C E Activities

1. Suppose the song sings itself from the jail for freedom. How would that song be?

2. Collect five poems that deal with the same theme - that of oppression and give your collection a title.

T E Questions

1. Who are the 'dreamers' and 'singers' of the poem?
2. Who denied them their freedom? Why?
3. How do you get the idea that the poet is optimistic of a better tomorrow?
4. What is the symbolic significance of 'dark' and 'cold'?

References

www.poemhunter.com
poetry.rapgenius.com
www.gradesaver.com
www.123helpme.com
If You Forget Me

Pablo Neruda

Concept
Themes of love and devotion to one's motherland or beloved.

Pains of separation.

This poem is an exemplar in the world of literature not because of the beautiful use of language but also because of the variety of literary devices used. The most prominent one is the metaphor.

Learning outcomes
The learner will be able to:
- identify the imagery used in the poem
- learn to differentiate between simile and metaphor
- locate figures of speech
- paraphrase the poem
- construct critical appreciation of the poem

Materials
- Video clippings

ICT
- 'If you Forget Me' recited by Jean Michel Jarre (in Madonna Music)
- 'If you Forget Me' video by Tom O'Bedlam
- 'If you Forget Me' recitation from Pearls of Wisdom

Introduction
With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Neruda became an ardent communist. As a senator of the outlawed Chilean Communist party, a warrant was issued for his arrest. But he escaped into exile. During his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1971, Neruda remembered his period of exile as a 'spiritual journey to freedom'. The poem under reference mourns his exile from Chile and hence, is an expression of his intense longing for his homeland, Chile.

This is also a patriotic love sonnet for one's homeland.

Summary
The poem can be read at two levels. It can either be viewed as an address to the poet's beloved or to his homeland. The poet believes that all that he sees/touches brings him closer to his
beloved/homeland. In the lines that passionately pour forth from his heart, the poet regrets that his love is not being reciprocated. He asserts that if his love is not returned in equal measure and is alienated, he will be forced to seek 'never pastures'. As a closing note, the poet reiterates his immortal love for his beloved/homeland and hopes to live and die in each other's arms.

**Entry Activity**

The teacher may start with the story of the first Prime Minister of India. He took an active role in India’s freedom struggle. As a consequence, he was imprisoned for nine years. Nehru made use of the time he spent in prison for writing. He penned his major works during this period. His 'Letters from a Father to his Daughter' has gone into the making of Indira Gandhi, as the 'Iron Lady of India'.

We will get to know of another personality who effectively utilised his time of exile exactly as Nehru did in the poem given as text.

**Hints for scaffolding questions**

1. Reader/beloved/homeland- As the poem progresses the teacher should be able to make the learners justify their answer.

2. | Tangible objects | Intangible objects |
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3. The 'isles' probably is the first reference to the Chilean islands where the poet has his roots. It can also be a reference to his beloved who is keeping away from him.

4. 'little by little'

5. Let the learners come up with their own answers. The 'heart' in the question may probably be his homeland where he has his roots.

6. 'my love feeds on your love…'

7. loving tone and an optimistic one

**Understanding the poem**

1. The teacher may help the learners pick suitable lines from the poem to complete the task.

2. address to a beloved - imagery of love - regrets unrequited love - symbols of love - ends on a loving note.

3. refer to the social background.

4. The word 'if' refers to conditionality. He wishes only for a reunion.

5. fire - his love keeps him alive; the severity of love.

flower - a common imagery to express love.
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<th>English Literature – Teacher Text</th>
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<td>6. the consonant /l/ is repeated more than twice in a sequence of words.</td>
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<td>7. Refer to personification in glossary - 'roots' and 'love' are personified.</td>
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<td>8. The image of the little boats, the 'isles'.</td>
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<td>9. The shift is first noticed towards the end of the second stanza and it keeps reverting as the poem progresses.</td>
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### Writing about the poem

The teacher may direct the learners to attempt the critical appreciation of the poem on the basis of the following points:

- Themes - love and devotion, pains of separation, everlasting love
- Language - direct and symbolic
- Literary devices used - symbols, imagery, metaphor, personification, hyperbole etc.
- Tone - how the author feels about the subject

**C E Activities**

1. Prepare a critical appreciation of the poem.
2. Presentation on Neruda's poems.

**T E Questions**

1. Why is the 'ash' referred to be 'impalpable'?
2. What is the relevance of 'boats'?
3. What does 'metals' stand for?
4. 'My love feeds on your love...' Justify.
5. Prepare a paragraph on the relevance of 'it' in the poem.

### References

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- hellopoetry.com
- www.youtube.com
- aysejuonedawordpress.com
- www.experienceproject.com