

POETRY: WARMING UP

We begin our study of the paper with poetry, as the humankind first sought to remember and store thoughts, feelings, emotions, experiences, events and incidents in VERSE. Poetry pierces through the normal awareness states and appeals to the deeper recesses of human consciousness. It is called musical representation of thought/idea. It captures emotionally intense moments, aesthetic feelings, reflective/philosophical moods and comic/playful moods as well. Whatever be mode and manner, poetry intrinsically must possess concentration.

Reading poetry then engages our faculties in totality. If we care to look at how we operate in life, it will be found that we are either in the rational or in the emotional mode. Not often do we catch us operating in the two modes at the same time. Our ability to balance reason and emotion holds the key to academic, professional success as increasingly proved by researches in human resource and communication. So plunge into the poems as a responsive person and develop as many responses as possible. For, learning is basically about forming responses. More the responses, more the complexity and intelligence. And more, when you have responses and know that you have them, thoughts genuinely yours occur. When thoughts thus develop, the urge to communicate them will also increase. Hence, the start with poetry.

The learning design for the three poems is intended not much to teach but enable you to get into the experience there. It prompts you to recognize and identify poetic techniques, devices employed. The exercises, besides helping comprehension, will also enable you to reflect on your learning. You must be well aware (the caption is all over the academia and the media) that 'learning to learn' has become an all-important mantra.

LUCY GRAY
by
William Wordsworth

Get ready
Into the groove

Tales, stories have never failed to fascinate us. We may think we have grown up enough not to be interested in stories. But is that the case? No, age doesn't matter. Tales well told will grip and hold us spell bound. Have you ever reflected on how tales take hold of you? The emotion is so strong that you start experiencing it and respond with emotions of your own. Tales and stories, be it in prose or verse, show us our own emotions. As readers and listeners of tales we have felt pity, fear, anger, disapproval etc. Here is one such tale in verse. Read it and find out what it does to you.

Focus

Do you think that loss of child is the most tragic of all experiences?
To what extent does the circumstances of the loss of child influence the tragic intensity?.
Have you seen parents grieving over lost child?

Recall to your mind any such incident you came across.
If not, you may remember scenes from movies depicting such an incident.

Find out

Form groups of four and tabulate your answers.

Serial No.	Name of Student	Incidents	Circumstances	Responses

Discuss

Choose your group leader to make the presentation.

LUCY GRAY

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
--The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night-
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon-
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;--and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

**They wept--and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
--When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.**

**Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;**

**And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.**

**They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!**

**--Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.**

**O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.**

The Author

William Wordsworth(1770-1850) was the leading poet during the Romantic age in English literature. He is known as a nature poet as his poetry deals with nature and its kinship with the human soul. He took a keen interest in depicting the lives of simple, rustic people.

The Text

‘Lucy Gray’, one of the Lucy poems, is a deeply moving piece. It is about an innocent girl who loses her way in a storm while looking for her mother. The innocence set against the violence of the storm enhances the pathos of the poem. One can’t resist feeling sadness while reading the poem. Towards the end of the poem, the poet lends a supernatural touch by mentioning the belief of the people that Lucy Gray is still alive. The strange, violent storm, the frantic search by the parents and the desolate landscape all these contribute the moving power of the poem.

Look up

solitary	:	without other people
mate	:	a friend
comrade	:	a friend
moor	:	a high open area of land not used for farming, covered with rough grass
fawn	:	a deer less than one year old
hare	:	an animal like a large rabbit with very strong back legs, that can run very fast
green	:	a area of grass, especially in the middle of a village or town
lantern	:	a lamp in a container, often with a metal case with glass sides and handle
scarcely	:	almost not
minster-clock	:	church clock
snapped	:	broke
faggot-band	:	band holding together a bunch of sticks tied together and for burning on a fire
plied	:	continued to do his work
blither	:	happy and free
roe	:	a small deer
wanton	:	usually means causing harm for no reason but here suggestive of carefree attitude, freedom
disperse	:	to cause something to go away in different directions
wretched	:	making you feel sympathy or pity
furlong	:	a distance of 201 metres; one eight of a mile
spied	:	suddenly saw or noticed
hawthorn	:	a small tree or bush, prickly with white or pink flowers and small dark red berries called haws
hedge	:	a row of bushes or small trees planted close together usually along the edge of a field
tracked	:	followed
plank	:	long, narrow wooden piece to make the floor of the bridge
lonesome	:	far away from where people live, where people very rarely go
wild	:	a natural environment not controlled by people

Get it right

Say whether True or False

1. Lucy Gray had lots of companions to play with. -----

Choose the correct answer

2. In the lines “The sweetest thing that ever grew beside a human door”

“ the sweetest thing” refers to

a) the fawn b) a fruit tree c) Lucy Gray d) a flower)

Say True or False

3. Lucy Gray goes to the town to guide her mother back with light. _____

Answer the question

4. What does Lucy Gray carry in her hand?

Say True or False

5. Lucy Gray is reluctant to go to the town.

6. Lucy Gray walked very slowly on her way to the town.

7. The storm came later than expected.

8. Lucy climbed many hills.

9. Lucy's mother reached home.

10. Lucy never reached the town.

11. Where did Lucy's parents see the bridge of wood?

12. What should be inferred from the words of the parents "in heaven we all shall meet."

13. Where did Lucy's footmarks end?

14. Where do people still see Lucy Gray?

Put it together

Arrange the sentences in the proper word order

1. chanced to see I at break of day the child solitary.
2. knew Lucy mate no comrade no
3. sweet Gray Lucy see you may lonesome wild upon the
4. song and sings solitary a

Spot it

1. Make pairs of words clubbing the last words of the first and third lines, and the second and fourth lines.

What do you see?

Read the poem aloud and find the sound effect created by the repetition of identical sounds.

2. Read the lines “ the sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door.”

What suggestion is effected by the verb ‘grew.’

3. Read the following stanza and visualize. Identify the visual words.

**Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.**

On Your Own

1. Explain how the note of loneliness dominates the poem.
2. We associate lonely people with dullness of movement and sadness. But in Lucy Gray, a solitary child, there is energy, vitality and gladness. Think on this and develop your own ideas on how the poet achieves this unusual combination.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

by
Robert Frost

Get ready **Into the groove**

Choices, decisions. Can anyone escape them in the journey called life? We arrive at forks, intersections in life when a choice or decision has to be made. Whether to take up a job or continue studies? Whether to get married or take up higher studies? Whether to study a science subject or an arts subject? Whether to stay in your small town or move to the city? Endless, isn't it? At such times, you would agree, that we always try to delay the choice or decision. But this delaying, procrastination must stop and a choice made. We make our choice and go through life. But are we totally content with our choice? We always think back and wonder whether choosing the alternative would have made our life better. Next time when your parents have an argument, look for the "what could have beens" they bring into it, regretting over choices made and those that were not. It is a fundamental condition of human life everyone must undergo. You face choices, hesitate and delay, make one and then doubt the one made and sigh about the one not made.

Sometimes the choice is determined by the fact that not many have opted for it earlier. The impulse to explore decides the selection of a comparatively untrodden path. But, can such a choice give us a sense of fulfillment?

Focus

When having to make a choice do you make it immediately or take time? Why?

We feel a sense of fear and anxiety before making important decisions. How do you manage these?

Find out

Serial No.	Name of Student	On what the choice/decision had to be made	Instantly made choice	Took time to make the choice	Avoided and never made the choice

Discuss

Choose your group leader to make the presentation.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The Author

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was one of the most popular poets during his time. He was a farmer-poet and this explains why nature dominates his poetry. Moving to England at the age of 38, he established himself as a poet with A Boy's Will (1913) and North of Boston (1914). He returned to the United States in 1915 to continue his vocation. A much celebrated poet, he was often called the country's unofficial poet laureate. He won the Pulitzer prize four times. We know him better for his poem " Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" the last four lines of which were the favourite of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. 'Birches,' 'Mending Walls,' 'Apple Picking,' 'Home Burial' and ' The Gift Outright' are some of his notable poems. A traditionalist in rhyme and metre, Frost dismissed experimentation and free verse as playing tennis with the nets down.

The Text

'The Road not Taken' is a much debated poem. It has given rise to various explanations and interpretations. The fact that it has fired human minds in such varied ways demonstrates the depth and richness of the poem. It refuses to allow itself to be bound by any one meaning. The poem so far has been interpreted as

- representing spiritual choices of the soul
- warning against procrastination of goals
- a satirical reflection of life
- not celebrating independent choices
- underlining the difficulty of having to make a choice at all
- a statement of the poet's desire to travel the two roads
- a message to take pride in the chosen path etc.

But we can generally agree that the poem is about “ nature of choice, of decision, of how to go in one direction rather than another and how to feel about the direction you took and didn’t take.” In short, Frost wants us to take a closer look at these thought-enabling, thought-producing moments that call for deep reflection.

Look up

- a) diverged : separated
- b) wood : an area of land, smaller than a forest, covered with growing trees
- c) undergrowth : a dense growth of shrubs and plants
- d) wanted wear : not used
- e) trodden : used, walked on

Get it right

Fill in the blanks with the correct words

Two roads _____ in a _____ wood (diverged, yellow/ met, thick)

Say True or False

1. The poet wanted to travel both the roads. _____
2. The poet did not look at the road not chosen. _____
3. The poet looked at the road not chosen as far as he could. _____
4. The road not chosen led to a huge plain. _____

Choose the correct answer

5. The road chosen had better claim because it
 - a. was wide
 - b. was filled with light
 - c. led to a coffee shop
 - d. was not much walked on

Say True or False

6. The poet is extremely happy that he has chosen the less trodden road. _____
7. The poet feels that passing over this road will make it also a used one and hence no difference. _____
8. The poet hopes to talk about his choice in the future. _____
9. The poet will be then absolutely satisfied and happy to have made the choice. _____

Fill in the blanks with the correct words

10. The poet shall be narrating his experiences with a _____ (sigh/ laugh).

Say True or False

11. The sigh is a sign of contentment. _____

Put it together

Rearrange the sentences in the correct sequence

1. The poet will be telling his experience in the future
2. The road not chosen bent in the undergrowth
3. Two roads diverged in yellow wood
4. The poet chose the road less traveled
5. The poet wanted to travel both the roads
6. The poet anyway would have the less traveled road more used by passing through it
7. The poet says that his choice has made all the difference
8. The poet might get back to the other road on some other day
9. He wonders whether, after having chosen a path, it would be possible to get back

Spot it

1. Identify the lines that rhyme.
2. The last line of the poem suggests the poet's probable contentment. Find out how the word 'sigh' in line 16 modifies the final statement.
3. 'The Road not Taken' is said to be on Frosts' friend Edward Thomas who accompanied the poet on their walks. It was a habit with Edward Thomas to castigate himself for not having taken another path than the one they took. (We all have come across such types, haven't we?)

Now pick out the lines that generate uncertainty and ambivalence.

ambivalence- mixed feelings and contradictory ideas about something.

4. Look at the ending of line 18: " I -----" and the repetition of the pronoun 'I' immediately in the following line. This, combined with the word 'sigh' in line 16 modifies the final statement. How?
5. What figure of speech is the road and travel in the poem?

On your Own

1. Comment on the poem's potential for multiple meanings.
2. **Journey is a basic conceptual metaphor for life. Explain how Frost handles it in " The road not Taken"**

ULYSSES

by

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Get ready

Into the groove:

The thirst for travel and adventure is present in each of us. Today, life has become rather predictable and there are moments when the routine tires us into dissatisfaction and restlessness. What do we do when cast into such a mood? May be go to a hill station, take up a trek in Kodai or Nilagiri hills or go up to the “ Thenaruvi” in Podigai hills. The novelty of or the difference in experience refreshes us. On the TV you have seen adventurers parachuting and skydiving for sports. This taking risk in order to enjoy a sense of achievement is inexplicable in people fond of adventure. Tennyson’s Ulysses is such an adventurer, who, dissatisfied with domestic routine wants to get back to his sailing ways. He is an adventurer after experience and knowledge.

Focus

Recall a mood of yours when you desperately wanted to break away from a routine. What were the things you wanted to do then?

We all have had our adventures on however small a scale it may be. List a couple of your little adventures and state the feelings they gave.

Find out

Serial No.	Name of Student	Travels	Adventures	Responses

Discuss

Choose your group leader to make the presentation

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vest the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers;
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breath were life. Life piled on life
Were all to little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle-
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me-
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads- you and I are old;
Old age had yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in the old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal-temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

The Author

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was one of the leading poets of the Victorian age in poetry. He was made the poet laureate after Wordsworth in 1850. Tennyson studied at Trinity College, Cambridge where he met Arthur Hallam who was to become his closest friend. Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' (1850) is an elegy mourning the death Arthur Hallam. Some of his other important poems are "The Lady of Shalott," "The Lotos Eaters" and "Morte d'Arthur."

The Text

'Ulysses' is in the form of a speech by the central character. This type of poem is called the dramatic monologue. Ulysses is the roman name for Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic Odyssey. He is back in Ithaca as king. An adventurer renowned for his cunning and resourcefulness, Ulysses has begun feeling restless about leading the routine domestic and court life. So he wants to hand over the responsibilities to his son Telemachus and set sail again to seek adventure and knowledge. In this respect, Tennyson's Ulysses is modelled on the figure in Dante's Inferno who wants to continue his seeking. In Homer's Odyssey every one of Ulysses' companions perish. Dante's Ulysses finally dies in his voyage in pursuit of

knowledge. We can understand this speech as being made after Ulysses' return to Ithaca and before embarking on his final voyage.

Though published in 1842, it is generally held that the poem was composed in 1833 during the weeks that followed Hallam's death. The poem then can be considered his own personal journey in the face of death. Tennyson said the poem is an expression of his own "need of going forward and braving the struggle."

The central character of the poem can be said to embody "passion for exploration and knowledge, a chief characteristic of Victorian age. There is also the other view that Tennyson's Ulysses stands for retreat, withdrawal. Ulysses' wanderlust can be understood as abdicating his responsibilities as householder and king.

Different readings of the poem are possible. But what has made the poem retain its appeal is the powerful plea for keeping alive the spirit of adventure in human beings.

Look up

1. hearth : the floor of the fire place, used here as a symbol of ones' home
2. mete : dispense, allot
3. dole : distribute
4. hoard : stock, store in a secretive way
5. lees : the sediment of wine in barrel, glass; dregs
6. scudding : moving fast in a straight line.
7. Hyades : The seven daughters of Atlas (the hero who carries the world on his shoulders) that died of sorrow when their brother Hyas died. They later became a constellation.
8. peers : persons of same age, status or ability
9. Troy : the city of king Priam that was besieged by the Greeks for ten years. It was finally overcome and destroyed. Ulysses (Odysseus) fought on the Greek side.
10. arch : curved symmetrical structure spanning an opening.
11. unburnished : unpolished
12. eternal : existing forever
13. three suns : days or years; here most probably three years
14. vile : extremely unpleasant
15. sceptre : an ornamental staff carried by rulers on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of sovereignty
16. isle : island
17. discerning : showing good judgement
18. prudence : ability to act with responsibility and foresight
19. rugged : tough and determined
20. meet adoration: suitable respect
21. puffs : swells
22. gloom : have a dark appearance
23. frolic : playful
24. unbecoming : not fitting or appropriate
25. smite : strike with a blow
26. furrow : a narrow trench made by a plough on the ground, here it means the hollow of the splashing waves.

27. gulfs : a deep inlet of sea surrounded by land with a narrow opening
28. Happy Isles : considered to be the Canary islands in the Atlantic; in Greek Mythology the dwelling place for virtuous souls after death
29. Achilles : the Greek hero whose weak spot was his heels. He killed the Trojan hero Hector and in turn was killed by Paris. His arms were then awarded to Ulysses. Here it probably alludes to Hallam, Tennyson's friend.
30. abides : continues without fading

Get it right

Say True or False

1. Ulysses feels he is the active king of Ithaca. _____
2. Ulysses wants to take rest. _____

Fill in the blanks

3. I will drink life to the _____. (lees/ less)
4. Ulysses has always roamed with a _____ heart. (contented/ hungry)
5. Ulysses drank delight of battle with _____. (peers/ bears)
6. He had the delight of battle in _____. (Ithaca/ Troy)
7. Ulysses is a part of all that he has _____. (eaten/ met)

Say True or False

8. Experience is compared to an arch. _____
9. "To most unburnished, not to shine in use!" In this line Ulysses compares himself to steel, a sword. _____

Fill in the blanks with the right words

10. Ulysses does not want to _____ and _____ himself. (move, strain/ store, hoard)
11. Ulysses wants to follow knowledge like a sinking _____. (ship/ star)

Say True or False

12. Ulysses does not violate the boundaries of human thought. _____
13. Telemachus is Ulysses' minister. _____

Choose the correct answer

14. Ulysses hands over to Telemachus
 - e. The sword and the spear
 - f. The pen and the book
 - g. The glass and the drink
 - h. The sceptre and isle

15. To make mild a rugged people, the prudence required should be

- a. sharp
- b. slow
- c. quick
- d. blunt

16. Telemachus is centred in the

- a. city of Ithaca
- b. ship that lies at the port
- c. sphere of common duties
- d. compound of his own residence

17. What awaits Ulysses at the port?

- a. the vessel puffing her sail
- b. a protest by his citizens
- c. a send off by his wife
- d. prevention from undertaking the journey

Fill in the blanks with the correct words

18. Old age has yet _____ and _____. (honour, toil/ boredom, weakness)

19. Death closes _____ but some work of _____ note may yet be done. (doors, weak/ all, noble)

20. Match the following

- 1. lights – moans
- 2. long day – climbs
- 3. slow moon – twinkle

Say True or False

21. Ulysses thinks it is too late to seek a new world. _____

22. Time and fate make one strong in old age. _____

23. Ulysses and his companions may be weak in body but strong in will.

Put it together

Rearrange the sentences in the correct word order

- 4. feels restless Ulysses with life routine
- 5. learnt a lot Ulysses has travels from his
- 6. lees to the life he drink wants to
- 7. compares experience he an arch to
- 8. moving away keeps the margin the untravelled world of
- 9. store and hoard Ulysses himself does not want to
- 10. Telemachus Ulysses son of is the

11. leaves Ulysses to Telemachus the scpetre and the isle
12. embark Ulysses is ready to on voyage his

Spot it

1. Quoting powerful lines or expressions is a habit with us. Identify such quotable lines from the poem.

e.g. "I will drink life to the lees"

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Study the line endings. In what way is this poem different from the other two poems?

3. We have already seen that the poem is in the form of a speech. Find out how the absence of rhyme helps in achieving speech effect.

4. Where does a thought usually end in this poem?

Examine where sentences end -line end or middle of the line?

You have a term for this practice. Supply the missing letters and get the word.

en_ am _ m _ nt

5. In the context of the poem the

land stands for _____

sea stands for _____

6. Spot the pictures embedded in the following lines

I will drink life to the lees

To rust unburnished, not to shine in use

To follow knowledge, like a sinking star

On your Own

1. **Describe the character of the speaker of the poem as it emerges from his speech.**
2. **Explain how the poem advocates a life of adventure and knowledge.**