



READING 2A Compare and contrast works of literature that express a universal theme. **2C** Relate the characters, setting, and theme of a literary work to the historical, social, and economic ideas of its time. **3** Evaluate the changes in sound and graphics in poetry across literary time periods.

DID YOU KNOW?

Percy Bysshe Shelley ...

- published two gothic novels while in his teens.
- wrote and circulated many controversial political pamphlets.
- supported vegetarianism.
- was not popular in his own day because of his radical views.

(background) Shelley's grave in Rome

Selected Poetry

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML12-860A

Meet the Author

Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792–1822

An idealist and a nonconformist, Percy Bysshe Shelley passionately opposed all injustice and dreamed of changing the world through poetry. He wrote with the fervent conviction that poetry nourishes the imagination, and the imagination—by enabling empathy for others—brings about social change.

Turbulent Early Years Born into an aristocratic family, Shelley enjoyed a happy early childhood. At school at Eton, however, the shy and eccentric adolescent suffered constant bullying, an experience that fueled a lifelong hatred of tyranny and conformity. Although Shelley enjoyed greater acceptance at Oxford University, he was soon expelled from the school for circulating an essay defending atheism. His refusal to renounce his views, coupled with his elopement in 1811 with the 16-year-old Harriet Westbrook, caused a permanent rupture with his conservative father.

Poet and Activist In 1812, Shelley moved to Dublin, where his work on behalf of Catholic emancipation and independence for Ireland brought him under the scrutiny of the British government. In his first major poem, *Queen Mab* (1813), he continued to attack social institutions such as marriage, the monarchy, and the church.

In 1814, Shelley met and fell in love

with another radical thinker, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, the daughter of the philosopher William Godwin and the feminist author Mary Wollstonecraft. Abandoning Harriet, who was then expecting their second child, Shelley eloped to France with Mary, returning to England several weeks later.

Social Outcast Shelley's scandalous behavior drew severe censure from British society, and he soon found himself an outcast. In 1816, Shelley fled with Mary to Geneva, Switzerland, where his stimulating conversations with the poet Lord Byron invigorated his thinking and writing. Two years later, following the suicide of Harriet, Shelley finally married Mary Godwin, and the couple settled permanently in Italy. In 1819, despite his grief over the recent deaths of his two infant children, Shelley produced many of his greatest poems, including "Ode to the West Wind" and the verse drama *Prometheus Unbound*.

A Tragic Death Between 1820 and 1822, Shelley enjoyed a period of relative stability in Pisa, during which he composed many fine lyrics, including *Adonais*, an elegy in memory of John Keats. On July 8, 1822, Shelley and a friend drowned when their boat capsized in a sudden storm. Shelley's ashes were buried in Rome, near the graves of John Keats and Shelley's son William.

Author Online

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LITERARY ANALYSIS: RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

Shelley's poetry is admired for its musicality, among other qualities. One element that makes poetry musical is **meter**, the regular repetition of a rhythmic unit. Each unit of meter, known as a **foot**, consists of one stressed syllable (ˈ) and one or more unstressed syllables (˘). An **iamb** is a foot that contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable: rēgrēt. A **trochee** is a foot that contains a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable: sŏrrŏw. The first chart shows types of feet. Meter is also expressed in terms of the number of feet in a line, as shown in the second chart.

Type of Foot	Number of Feet
iamb (˘ ˈ)	monometer—one
trochee (ˈ ˘)	dimeter—two
anapest (˘ ˘ ˈ)	trimeter—three
dactyl (ˈ ˘ ˘)	tetrameter—four
	pentameter—five
	hexameter—six

Iambic pentameter, the most common meter in English, contains five sets of iambs:

ī mēt|ā trave|lēr frŏm|ān|āntīq|ue lānd

As you read the following poems, identify the meter. Also notice departures from the regular meter and the effect they have.

Review: Rhyme Scheme

READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The **historical context** of a literary work refers to the social conditions that inspired or influenced its creation. Romanticism in 19th-century England developed in part as a reaction to the French Revolution, the rise and fall of Napoleon, the industrialization of the economy, and the poverty and oppression of workers. Shelley wrote "Ode to the West Wind" in 1819, the year of the Peterloo massacre, in which workers demonstrating for reform were killed by soldiers. Another poem, "Sonnet: England in 1819," explicitly condemns England's "leech-like" rulers, her army's "liberticide," and her "Christless" religion. As you read the following works by Shelley, written over a span of 2½ years, consider their historical context and that they are poems of protest.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

What can NATURE teach us?

Romantic poets believed that profound lessons could be learned from observing nature. They believed that there was no greater beauty than that found in nature, and they saw higher truths reflected in natural scenes.

QUICKWRITE Visualize one of the following elements of nature—a sand dune, the wind, or a bird. Think deeply about it. What lesson about life could it suggest to you? Contemplating the wind, for example, might make you realize that any life circumstance can suddenly change, as the wind does. Jot down one possible lesson about life and discuss it in a small group. Then read Shelley's poems to find out what lessons he saw in sand, the west wind, and the song of a skylark.



Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
5 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
10 “My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay **A**
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

2 trunkless legs: legs separated from the rest of the body.

4 visage (vīz’ij): face.

6–8 The passions outlast the sculptor whose hand mocked those passions and the king whose heart fed those passions.

10 Ozymandias (ōz’ī-măn’dē-əs): a Greek name for the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II, who reigned from 1279 to 1213 B.C.

A RHYTHMIC PATTERNS
What words in lines 12 and 13 are emphasized by their departure from the regular meter?

Literary Analysis

- 1. Clarify** What kind of man was Ozymandias?
- 2. Identify Irony** What is ironic about the words on his pedestal?
- 3. Understand Historical Context** What message is there in the poem for European kings or self-proclaimed emperors like Napoleon?

Head of Rameses II at Thebes, Egypt





ODE TO THE *West Wind*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, **B**
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
5 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

10 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear! **C**

II

15 Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled bough of Heaven and Ocean,

B RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

Read lines 1–9 aloud. What
is the predominant **meter**?

4 **hectic**: feverish.

9 **sister . . . Spring**: the reviving south
wind of spring.

10 **clarion**: a trumpet with a clear,
ringing tone.

C RHYME SCHEME

Describe the interlocking pattern
of rhyme, called **terza rima**, in
the first four stanzas of section I.
How does the fifth stanza bring
the pattern to a close?

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
 20 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 25 Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 30 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

35 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 40 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 45 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

18 **angels**: messengers.

19 **aëry**: airy.

20–22 **Like . . . height**: The clouds lie in streaks from the horizon upward, looking like the streaming hair of a maenad (mē'nād')—a wildly dancing female worshiper of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine.

23 **dirge**: funeral song.

25 **sepulcher** (səp'əl-kər): tomb.

31 **crystalline** (krī's-tāl'īn) **streams**: the different-colored currents of the Mediterranean Sea.

32 **pumice** (pūm'īs): a light volcanic rock; **Baiae's** (bī'ēz') **bay**: the Bay of Naples, site of the ancient Roman resort of Baiae.

37 **level powers**: surface.

Language Coach

Formal Language Language that sounds formal may in fact be archaic, or out of date. In line 43, Shelley uses the archaic verb ending *-est* in *mightest*. What verbs in lines 6 and 29 have similar endings? Why does Shelley use this archaic form?

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
50 As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

55 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

60 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!

65 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

70 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? **D**

50 skyey (skī'ē) **speed**: the swiftness of clouds moving across the sky.

51 vision: something impossible to achieve.

57 lyre: a reference to the Aeolian harp, an instrument whose strings make musical sounds when the wind blows over them.

62 impetuous (ĩm-pěch'ōō-əs): violently forceful; impulsive.

65 incantation: recitation, as of a magic spell.

D HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In lines 63–70, what does the poet imply is the state of the world? Relate these lines to the social conditions mentioned on pages 860 and 861.

Literary Analysis

- 1. Analyze the Ode** An **ode** is an exalted, complex lyric that develops a single, dignified theme. Many odes praise people or elements of nature. What qualities of the west wind are glorified in this ode?
- 2. Make Inferences** What does the poet request of the west wind, and why?
- 3. Interpret Metaphor** Give your interpretation of the last line. What might be meant by “Winter” and “Spring”?



TO A *Skylark*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
5 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
10 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. **E**

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
15 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

1 blithe (blīth): carefree.

5 unpremeditated (ŭn'prī- mēd'ī-tā'tīd): natural; not planned out ahead of time.

E RHYTHMIC PATTERNS
Describe the **meter** of the first stanza. Is the metrical pattern maintained in the second stanza? Explain.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
20 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
25 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
30 The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou are we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
35 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
40 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not: **F**

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
45 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
50 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view!

16 even: evening.

22 silver sphere: the planet Venus, called the morning star because it is visible in the east just before daybreak.

F HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Reread lines 36–40. Notice how Shelley views the poet's role. Use your background reading to speculate about the "hopes and fears" unheeded by the world.

45 bower: private room; boudoir or bedroom.

46 glowworm: wingless female firefly or firefly larva.

49 aërial (âr'ê-əl) **hue:** insubstantial glow.

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 55 Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 60 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 65 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. **G**

Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 70 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 75 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee:
 80 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 85 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

53 **deflowered**: fully opened.

55 **thieves**: the warm winds.

56 **vernal**: spring.



TEKS 3

G GRAPHICS

Stanza form, line lengths, and unconventional use of punctuation are graphic elements that draw attention to the poem's appearance on the page. For example, Shelley capitalizes words that are not normally capitalized, such as *sprite* and *bird* in line 61. The poem's stanzas have a light and airy form, with a few short lines of varying lengths floating in the abundant white space of the page. How are Shelley's themes in the poem reflected by his use of these graphic elements?

66 **Chorus Hymeneal** (hī'mə-nē'əl): a wedding song.

69 **vaunt**: boast.

71 **fountains**: sources.

77 **languor** (lǎng'gər): lack of energy; listlessness.

80 **satiety** (sə-tī'ī-tē): fulfillment to excess.

82 **deem**: know.

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not:
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 90 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. **H**

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 95 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 100 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 105 The world should listen then—as I am listening now. **I**

H RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

How is **rhythm** used to emphasize the last line of each stanza? Read line 90 aloud, considering what to stress and where to pause.

91 if: even if.

I HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Reread lines 101–105, considering the era in which Shelley was writing. What might he want the world to hear?

Literary Analysis

1. **Recall** To what things does the speaker compare the skylark?
2. **Summarize** In the speaker's eyes, what makes the skylark different from humans and its song different from human songs?
3. **Clarify** In lines 101–105, what does the speaker want the skylark to teach him, and what would he do with this knowledge?



An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
5 But leechlike to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow—
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield—
10 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A Senate—Time’s worst statute unrepealed,
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day. **J**

1. An old, mad . . . king: King George III, who had ruled since 1760 and was declared incurably insane in 1811. He died in 1820.

8. liberticide: the killing of freedom.

10. Golden and sanguine laws: corrupt, unjust laws passed using bribery and resulting in bloodshed.

12. statute unrepealed: the law forbidding Catholics to hold office.

J HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Shelley strongly protests King George III’s rule by building a dramatic list of the negative effects the king has had on England. How does the way Shelley constructs his poem as a list contribute to its power as a work of political protest?

Comprehension

1. **Recall** How does Shelley describe the king of England?
2. **Recall** According to the poem, what are the effects of the king's rule on England's people?
3. **Clarify** What does the "Phantom" at the end of the poem signify?

Literary Analysis

4. **Compare Imagery** What are the most striking images in these four poems? Explain what makes this imagery effective.
5. **Interpret Symbols** In the poems, what larger ideas are symbolized by the following elements of **nature**?
 - the sands near the statue of Ozymandias
 - the skylark
 - the west wind
 - the muddy spring
6. **Examine Rhythmic Patterns** What is the **meter** of each poem? In which poem is the meter most regular? Discuss instances in which the rhythm of lines helps communicate ideas.
7. **Evaluate Sound Devices** How skillfully does Shelley use other sound devices besides meter? Support your opinion with examples.
8. **Analyze Form** Review page 311, and then explain how "Ozymandias" shows the characteristics of a **Petrarchan**, or **Italian, sonnet**. How closely do the numbered sections of "Ode to the West Wind" match the sonnet form?
9. **Apply Historical Context** Use your knowledge of Shelley's times and political views to interpret his four poems as protest poems. From the poems, what would you guess is his vision of an ideal society?

Literary Criticism

10. **Critical Interpretations** In "A Defense of Poetry" (page 876), Shelley writes that "Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed." In what ways is this comment reflected in the poems you read? Explain.



READING 2A Compare and contrast works of literature that express a universal theme. **2C** Relate the characters, setting and theme of a literary work to the historical, social, and economic ideas of its time. **3** Evaluate the changes in sound and graphics in poetry across literary time periods.

*What can **NATURE** teach us?*

Name an animal that, to you, symbolizes an abstract concept, such as liberty or fear. Which characteristics of this animal symbolize the concept? Why?

Conventions in Writing

◆ GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Create Effective Imagery

Shelley was an inventive poet who created striking and exquisite imagery through his use of personification. **Personification** is a figure of speech in which an object, animal, or idea is given human qualities. In the following passage from “Ode to the West Wind,” Shelley personifies the sea life in the Mediterranean to show how powerfully the west wind affects it:

*The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!* (lines 39–42)

Notice how Shelley assigns characteristics to the natural world that would normally be attributed to humans, such as *fear* to the sea plants and a *voice* to the west wind. This use of personification enables readers to form a vivid mental picture of the wind and its power.

PRACTICE Copy each of the following lines from “Ode to the West Wind.” Then compose your own lines about an element of nature, mimicking Shelley’s use of personification in order to create effective imagery.

EXAMPLE

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; / Destroyer and preserver;
hear, oh, hear!
Lonely sky, which art weeping everywhere, / Mourner and rager; sleep, oh sleep!

1. ... O thou, / Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed / The wingéd seeds,
where they lie cold and low, ...
2. Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow / Her clarion o’er the dreaming earth, ...

READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Expand your understanding of Shelley’s poems by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tips** to improve your poem.

WRITING PROMPT

WRITE A POEM Write a **poem** in which you attempt to capture the “sleeping beauty” of an element of nature, as Shelley does in “Ode to the West Wind” and “To a Skylark.” Try to use **rhyme**, **meter**, and **personification** as Shelley does in his poems.

REVISING TIPS

- Include rich imagery that appeals to the five senses.
- Address your subject as if it were human to help personify it.



WRITING 14B Write a poem.
15C Analyze the aesthetic effects of an author’s use of stylistic or rhetorical devices.

Interactive
Revision



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