



**READING 2A** Compare and contrast works of literature that express a universal theme. **3** Evaluate the changes in sound, form, figurative language, graphics, and dramatic structure in poetry across literary time periods. **7** Analyze how the author's patterns of imagery, literary allusions, and conceits reveal theme, set tone, and create meaning in metaphors, passages, and literary works.

## Dover Beach To Marguerite—Continued

Poetry by Matthew Arnold

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML12-1054A

### Meet the Author

## Matthew Arnold 1822–1888

Matthew Arnold's poetry and prose made him a leading voice of the Victorian Age. Yet Arnold didn't earn his living as a writer. He worked for over 30 years as a school inspector, visiting schools all over Britain and traveling abroad to report on educational developments in other countries. His travels, both domestic and foreign, allowed him to study the culture and society of his day—and convinced him that he must speak out about the problems he perceived.

**A Famous Father** Arnold's career in education was not surprising, as he was the son of one of Victorian Britain's most famous educators. As headmaster of the Rugby School, Dr. Thomas Arnold initiated reforms that revolutionized British education of the day. Matthew Arnold was not a model student at his father's school—

in fact, one biographer describes him as “a fanciful and relatively idle boy.” Nevertheless, he managed to win a scholarship to Oxford University.

**Mentors and Muses** Arnold showed early promise as a poet, winning one prestigious poetry prize at Rugby and another at Oxford. His interest in verse was inspired in part

by his family's friendship with William Wordsworth, who lived near the Arnolds' vacation home. It was also nurtured by future poet Arthur Hugh Clough, who became Arnold's critiquing partner at Oxford as well as his closest friend. When Arnold published his first book of poems in 1849, their sad and serious nature surprised many who knew him, since to the world he generally showed his charming, lighthearted side. But the young poet had certainly known sorrow—he lost his father to a heart attack while still at Oxford and suffered from unrequited love for a neighbor named Mary Claude, whom some biographers think is the Marguerite of his poetry.

**A Part-Time Author** In 1850, Arnold fell in love again, this time with the daughter of a prominent judge. In need of sufficient income to gain his future father-in-law's consent to the marriage, Arnold took the post of British schools inspector. For the rest of his life, he continued writing in his spare time. In addition to major literary criticism, Arnold produced several nonfiction works addressing the sense of isolation and loss that he expresses in his poetry. A passionate advocate of the arts, he stressed the value of culture in curbing modern feelings of alienation and in bringing direction to modern life.

### Author Online

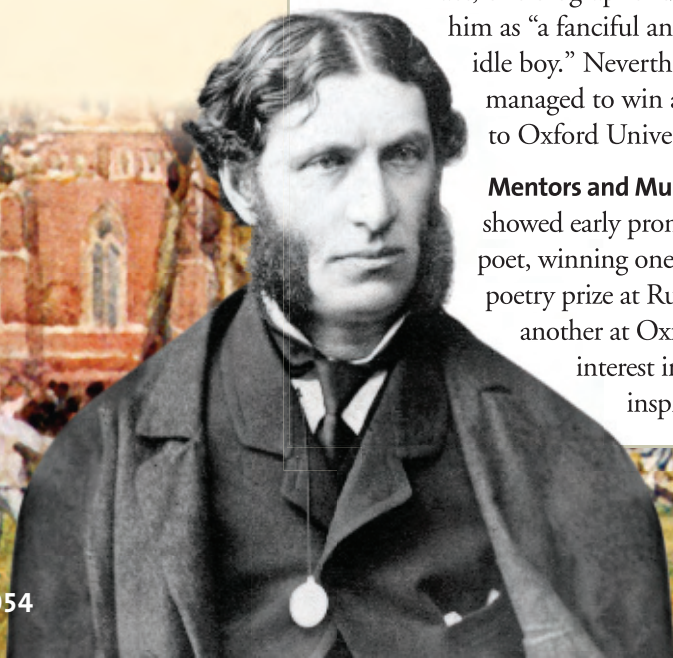
Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com). KEYWORD: HML12-1054B



### DID YOU KNOW?

Matthew Arnold ...

- spent more time socializing than studying while in college, and so barely passed his exams.
- may have written “Dover Beach” while on his honeymoon.
- published his first two books under the pen name “A.”



**LITERARY ANALYSIS: THEME**

You know that the **theme** of a poem is the central message the poet wishes to convey. Matthew Arnold, a social critic as well as a poet, was disturbed by the massive shifts of the Victorian era—a time of rapid social, economic, and religious change. In his poetry, Arnold deals with the loneliness of humankind in an indifferent universe, bereft of old certainties. As you read “Dover Beach” and “To Marguerite—Continued,” examine the literary elements that convey each poem’s universal theme.

- **Mood**—Identify the atmosphere Arnold creates for the reader; determine whether the mood changes or remains consistent.
- **Imagery and figurative language**—Note the details that create a vivid mental picture of the scene described.
- **Allusions**—Note any indirect references to people, places, or literary works.

**READING SKILL: ANALYZE SPEAKER**

One thing that will help you interpret the themes of Arnold’s poems is a careful analysis of each **speaker**. As you read, ask yourself the following questions about the persona adopted in each poem. For each poem, use a chart like the one shown to record your thoughts, and be sure to note evidence from the text that supports your analysis.

<i>Questions About the Speaker</i>	<i>My Thoughts</i>	<i>Evidence from the Text</i>
<i>Whom is he addressing?</i>		
<i>Where does he seem to be?</i>		
<i>What is his state of mind?</i>		
<i>Does his attitude change over the course of the poem? If so, how?</i>		

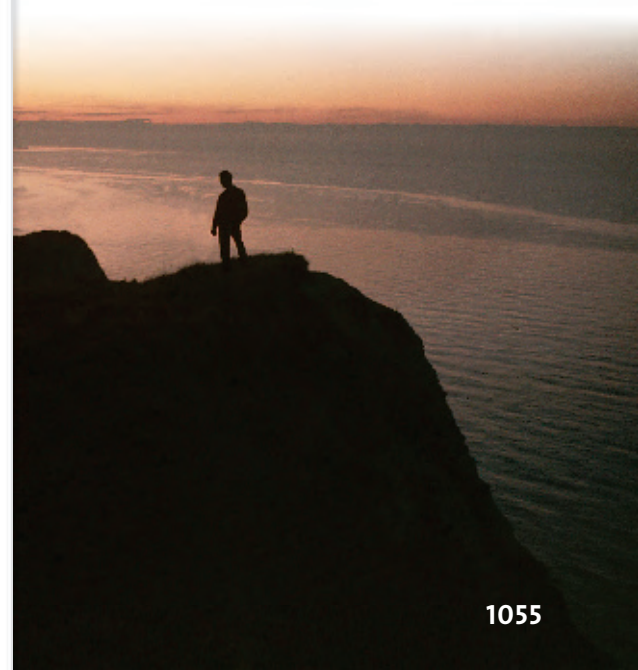


Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

# *Is the world* **INDIFFERENT** *to us?*

In the Victorian era, new scientific theories challenged age-old beliefs about the world and our place within it. These developments stirred up feelings of doubt and isolation in many people, including Matthew Arnold. Unlike earlier poets, such as Wordsworth, who took comfort in nature, Arnold wrote about nature’s indifference to the fate of humanity.

**QUICKWRITE** When you think about nature, do you feel a sense of belonging, or does the universe seem cold and indifferent to you? Respond to this question in one or two paragraphs.



# Dover Beach

Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm tonight.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits—on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
5 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
10 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

15 Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
20 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
25 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
30 To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
35 And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night. **A**

**3 straits:** the Strait of Dover, a narrow channel separating England and France, located at the northern end of the English Channel.

**8 moon-blanch'd:** shining palely in the moonlight.

**13 tremulous cadence** (trēm'yə-ləs kād'ns): trembling rhythm.

**15 Sophocles** (sŏf'ə-klēz'): an ancient Greek writer of tragic plays.

**16 Aegean** (ĭ-jē'ən): the Aegean Sea, the portion of the Mediterranean Sea between Greece and Turkey.

**17 turbid:** in a state of turmoil; muddled.

**21 Sea of Faith:** traditional religious beliefs about God and the world, long viewed as true and unshakable.

**23 girdle:** a belt or sash worn around the waist.

**27 drear:** dreary.

**28 shingles:** pebbly beaches.

## **A ANALYZE SPEAKER**

Whom is the speaker addressing, and why do you think the poem is addressed to this person? Explain what this indicates about the speaker's feelings regarding isolation.





# *To Marguerite —Continued*

*Matthew Arnold*

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,  
With echoing straits between us thrown,  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
We mortal millions live alone.  
5 The islands feel the enclosing flow,  
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,  
And they are swept by balms of spring,  
And in their glens, on starry nights,  
10 The nightingales divinely sing;  
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,  
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair  
Is to their farthest caverns sent;  
15 For surely once, they feel, we were  
Parts of a single continent!  
Now round us spreads the watery plain—  
Oh might our marges meet again! **B**

Who ordered that their longing's fire  
20 Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?  
Who renders vain their deep desire?—  
A God, a God their severance ruled!  
And bade betwixt their shores to be  
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

**1 enisled** (ěn-ild'): separated, like islands.

**6 bounds:** limits or boundaries.

**8 balms:** soothing scents and airs.

**9 glens:** valleys.

**12 sounds:** long, wide bodies of water, larger than channels.

**18 marges:** margins.

## **B THEME**

To what does Arnold compare mortals? What might this **metaphor** suggest about the poem's message?

**22 severance:** separation.

**24 unplumbed:** unmeasured;  
**estranging** (ĩ-strān'jĩng): alienating.



## Comprehension

1. **Recall** In “Dover Beach,” what emotion does the speaker associate with the sound of the tides?
2. **Summarize** Explain the request made by the speaker in the final stanza of “Dover Beach.”
3. **Clarify** Who, according to the speaker of “To Marguerite—Continued,” separates him from his love?

## Literary Analysis

4. **Identify Controlling Image** Poets often make use of a controlling image—a single image or comparison that extends throughout a literary work and shapes its meaning. Re-examine “To Marguerite—Continued.” What controlling image shapes this poem? What yearning does this image convey?
5. **Analyze Speaker** Review the chart you filled in as you read. After reading these two poems, how would you describe each speaker? Citing evidence, explain
  - whom the speaker of each poem is addressing
  - each speaker’s state of mind
  - the ideas each expresses about the possibilities or limitations of human love
6. **Interpret Allusion** “Dover Beach” contains an allusion to Sophocles, an ancient Greek playwright. Why do you think Arnold makes this reference?
7. **Examine Theme** What do these poems convey about mankind’s sense of the universe’s indifference? For each poem, write a sentence stating the theme. Reviewing the information on page 1055, explain which literary elements Arnold uses to convey each theme.
8. **Compare Texts** In his famous “Meditation 17” (page 522), John Donne writes, “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” On the basis of these poems, how would you contrast Arnold’s views with Donne’s? Cite evidence from both writers’ work to support your answer.

## Literary Criticism

9. **Different Perspectives** Comedic actress Lily Tomlin once advised, “Just remember, we’re all in this alone.” If Matthew Arnold were writing today, do you think he’d react to the modern world as he reacted to the world in his own time? Explain, citing examples from Arnold’s work and aspects of modern life that shaped your opinion.



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*Is the world* **INDIFFERENT** *to us?*

Is your view of nature like that of the Victorians or of the Lake Poets? Discuss a time when you found nature to be indifferent to your existence.