

## **Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"**

I met a traveller 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  
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:  
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

1. What is the rhyme scheme of the first eight lines?
  - a. ABACADAC
  - b. ABABACDC
  - c. ABABABCB
  - d. ABADACDC
  - e. ABABCBCB
  
1. What is the central image of the poem?
  - a. A collapsed statue in the desert
  - b. A wounded king
  - c. A face and inscription on a coin
  - d. A plaque near a WWII battle site
  - e. The Sphinx

## **Excerpt from Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry"**

Therefore compare we the poet with the historian and with the moral philosopher. . . . The philosopher therefore and the historian are they which would win the goal, the one by precept, the other by example; but both not having both, do both halt. For the philosopher, setting down with thorny arguments the bare rule, is so hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall wade in him till he be old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general that happy is that man who may understand him, and more happy that can apply

what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things, and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless poet perform both; for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture, I say; for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth. For as, in outward things, to a man that had never seen an elephant or a rhinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shapes, color, bigness, and particular marks; or of a gorgeous palace, an architector, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceit with being witness to itself of a true lively knowledge; but the same man, as soon as he might see those beasts well painted, or that house well in model, should straightways grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them; so no doubt the philosopher, with his learned definitions, be it of virtues or vices, matters of public policy or private government, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which notwithstanding lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.

2. What is the author's primary criticism of the philosopher?
  - a. The philosopher communicates only general, abstract ideas.
  - b. The philosopher can make an untrue argument seem true.
  - c. The philosopher cannot know truth beyond the five senses.
  - d. The philosopher is difficult to understand.
  - e. The philosopher cannot attain true wisdom.
3. What is the author's primary criticism of the historian?
  - a. The historian considers only abstract precepts.
  - b. The historian may distort events to reflect political preferences.
  - c. The historian deals only with particular events, not general principles.
  - d. The historian can see only the past through the lens of the present.
  - e. The historian is difficult to understand.
4. The author praises poets primarily for their ability to:
  - a. Preserve the highest values of the past.
  - b. Write both abstract ideas and particular details.
  - c. Communicate more clearly than the philosopher.
  - d. Entertain and instruct.
  - e. Speak of the present as a historian speaks of the past.

5. Which of the following best captures the meaning of the final sentence in the above passage?
- a. A poet can make the philosopher's wisdom appeal to the imagination of the reader.
  - b. The philosopher's ideas appeal to the imagination of the audience, but not to the intellect.
  - c. The philosopher is wiser than the poet in matters of public policy and private government.
  - d. The painter can illuminate the ideas of the philosopher best of all.
  - e. The imagination is of no use in acquiring wisdom.

**Excerpt from Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness***

“Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once--somewhere--far away--in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it any more; I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out, when I shaved by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a look-out for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day's steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality--the reality, I tell you--fades. The inner truth is hidden--luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight-ropes for--what is it? half-a-crown a tumble--”

7. The punctuation marks that open and close this passage indicate that it is taken from:
- A novel.
  - Dialogue.
  - The early 1900s.
  - The author's point of view.
  - A soliloquy in a play.
8. In the last sentence of this passage, what does the pronoun "it" refer to?
- "The inner truth"
  - "Mysterious stillness"
  - "Mere incidents of the surface"
  - "The reality"
  - "Monkey tricks"
9. When the character in this passage says, "And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. . . . It looked at you with a vengeful aspect," what literary device is being employed?
- Metaphor
  - Allusion
  - Personification
  - Metonym
  - Symbolism
10. What is the setting of the story the character is telling?
- On a river
  - In an aircraft
  - In a horse-drawn carriage
  - On large ocean vessel
  - On the Thames River in London

## Answers

1. B.

Only choice (B) is correct. The rhyme scheme of the first eight lines falls into the following pattern: ABABACDC. The rhyming words are, "land," "stone," "sand," "frown," "command," "read," "things," and "fed."

1. A.

The central image of the poem is choice (A), a collapsed statue in the desert. The image is explicitly described in lines 2 through 4: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies." None of the other choices reflect the imagery of the poem.

### Excerpt from Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry"

3. A.

Choice (A), "The philosopher only communicates general, abstract ideas," is the best answer. In the passage, the author argues that the philosopher's knowledge "standeth so upon the abstract and general that happy is that man who may understand him." In other words, the philosopher's language is difficult to understand because it is abstract. Choice (B) repeats a common criticism of early Greek philosophers, but it does not reflect the idea stated in this passage. Choice (C) reflects a concern of philosophy — "whether knowledge exists that is not filtered through our senses — "but it is not the concern of this passage. Choice (D) is, to some extent, correct. However, the question asks you to consider the author's *primary* criticism, which is better expressed in choice (A). Choice (E) is not implied by the passage.

4. C.

The author's criticism of the historian is the inverse of his criticism of the philosopher, so the best choice is (A), "The historian only deals with particular events, not general principles." Choice (B) is not in fitting with the concerns of this passage. Choice (C) is true of the author's criticism of the philosopher but not that of the historian. Choice (D) does not reflect the author's point of view. Choice (D), again, is true of the philosopher but not of the historian.

5. B.

The author praises poets for their ability to combine the best characteristics of the historian and the best of the philosopher. Choice (B), which says the poet uses “both abstract ideas and particular details,” is the best choice. Choice (A) is something the author might say of the philosopher, but he does not make this statement of the poet. Choice (C) is in one sense true, but it is not the *primary* point the author makes about the poet. Choice (D) is reminiscent of arguments other philosophers have made about the importance of the poet, but it does not reflect this particular author’s point of view. Choice (E) is not in keeping with the argument in this passage.

6. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer. It states that the “poet can make the philosopher’s wisdom appeal to the imagination of the reader.” This statement provides the closest paraphrase of the final sentence from the passage, which states that the philosopher’s wisdom “lie[s] dark before the imaginative and judging power, if [it] be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.” Choice (B) is not true of the passage; it states the opposite of the passage’s main claim. Choice (C) is incorrect because it incorrectly interprets the author’s meaning. Choice (D) also incorrectly interprets the author’s meaning. Choice (E) contradicts the final statement in the passage.

**Excerpt from Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness***

7. B.

Choice (B), dialogue, is the best answer to the question. The quotation marks that open and close the passage indicate that it is excerpted from dialogue. While choice (A), a novel, may be true, it does not answer the question, as the quotation marks in themselves would not indicate that the passage comes from a novel. Choice (C), the early 1900s, is also true, but likewise has nothing to do with quotation marks. Choice (D), the author’s point of view, risks what some literary critics call the “intentional fallacy;” we can never truly know the author’s point of view unless we have letters or other types of documentation. Choice (E), soliloquy, which is a type of speech given by a character in a play, is unlikely because the passage contains none of the other typography associated with a play--stage directions, for instance.

8. B.

Answer (B) is the best choice. In grammatical terms, the pronoun “it” is singular, and the word it refers to would also have to be singular. This knowledge can help you rule out choices (C) and (E). In best grammatical practice, a singular pronoun should refer back to the nearest singular noun. Choices (A) and (D), then, could both be ruled out because they come before the phrase “mysterious stillness.”

9. C.

Choice (C), personification, is the best answer. The speaker is attributing human characteristics to an abstract idea. Specifically, the speaker says that the abstraction “stillness of life” looks upon him with “a vengeful aspect” (which means a resentful face). Choice (A), metaphor, is not the best choice because personification is a more precise answer than metaphor. Choice (B), allusion, means that the quotation refers to another work, which it does not. Choice (D), metonym, is not as precise as personification. Choice (E), symbolism, does not apply to this passage because “vengeful aspect” would not be best described as a symbolic image, which refers to an image that reinforces the themes of the story through some implied meaning.

10. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer because the first sentence of the passage reads, “Going up that river.” Choice (B) would be contradicted by the imagery of the passage, which describes the riverbank in close detail. No evidence from the passage can be found that supports choice (C). While choice (D), an ocean vessel, might be a tempting choice, it is unlikely that an ocean vessel would be used for river travel such as is described here. Choice (E) may also be tempting to students who recognize this passage as an excerpt from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and know that the novel begins on the Thames River, but the question asks about the setting of “the story the speaker is telling,” the details of which do not suggest London at all.