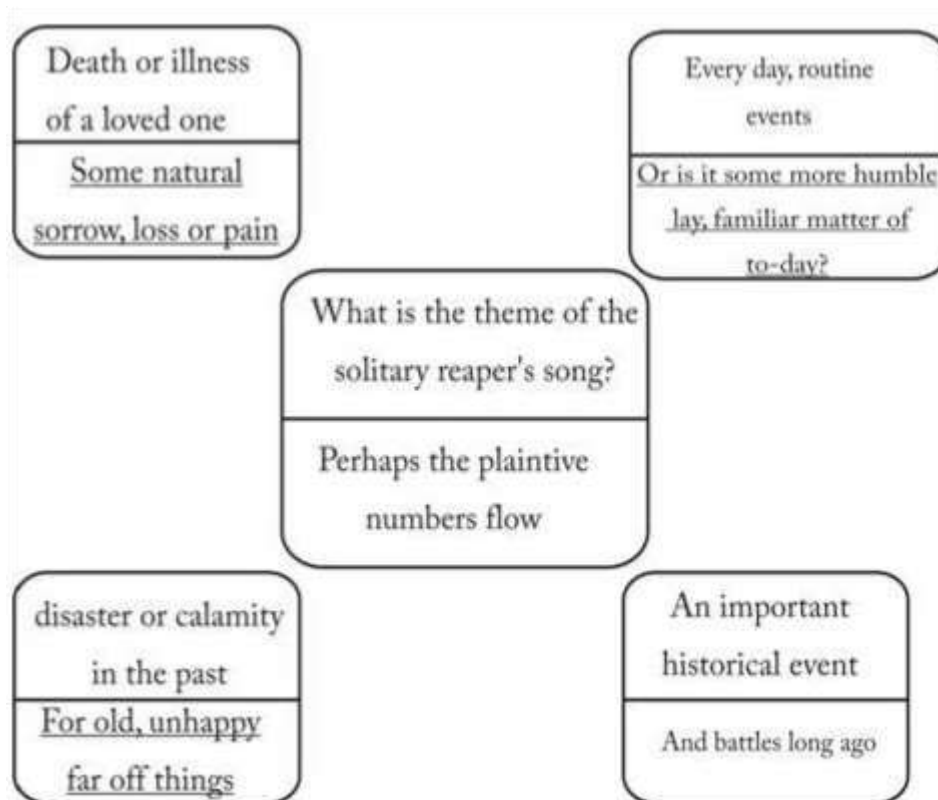


The Solitary Reaper

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5. The poet could not understand the words of the song, yet he raised several possibilities about its theme. In the diagram below are some of these possibilities. Read the third stanza again, and find the phrase that matches each. Copy and complete the diagram, writing each phrase in the empty boxes. Work in pairs.

Answer



6. On the basis of your understanding of the poem, answer the following questions by ticking the correct choice.

(a) The central idea of the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' is _____. (i) well sung songs give us happiness (ii) melodious sounds appeal to all (iii) beautiful experience give us life-long pleasure (iv) reapers can sing like birds

Answer

(iii) beautiful experience give us life-long pleasure

(b) In the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' to whom does the poet say 'Stop here or gently pass'? (i) to the people cutting corn (ii) to himself (iii) to the people who make noise (iv) to all the passers by

Answer

(iv) to all the passers by

(c) The Solitary Reaper is a narrative poem set to music. This form of verse is called a _____. (i) ballad (ii) soliloquy (iii) monologue (iv) sonnet **Answer**

(i) ballad

(d) The poet's lament in the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' is that _____ (i) he cannot understand the song (ii) he did not know the lass (iii) she stopped singing at once (iv) he had to move away

Answer

(i) he cannot understand the song

(e) The setting of the poem is _____ (i) Arabia (ii) Hebrides (iii) Scotland (iv) England

Answer

(iii) Scotland

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7. (a) Read the second stanza again, in which Wordsworth compares the solitary reaper's song with the song of the nightingale and the cuckoo. On the basis of your reading (and your imagination), copy and complete the table below. (Work in groups of four, then have a brief class discussion.)

	Place	Heard by	Impact on listener
Solitary Reaper	Scottish Highlands	The poet	Holds him spellbound
Nightingale			
Cuckoo			

Answer

	Place	Heard by	Impact on listener
Solitary Reaper	Scottish Highlands	The poet	Holds him spellbound

Nightingale	Arabian sands	Travellers	reduces the tiredness of travellers
Cuckoo	Hebrides	People from far off lands	has far-reaching effect, heralds the coming of spring, end of winter

(b) Why do you think Wordsworth has chosen the song of the nightingale and the cuckoo for comparison with the solitary reaper's song?

Answer

The nightingale and the cuckoo are known as song-birds. Many poets have written about their melodious notes and there is a reference to nightingale even in the Bible. So the poet has chosen their songs for comparison with the Solitary Reaper's song.

8. In the sixth line of the first Stanza, we read:

“... and sings a melancholy strain...”

This “s” sound at the beginning of sings and strain has been repeated. Poets often do this. Do you know why? Do you know what this “poetic repetition” is called? Can you find instances of this in The Solitary Reaper?

Answer

Poets often repeat such sounds to make the effect more intense and ornamental. This “poetic repetition” is called alliteration.

In line 15 we find an instance of alliteration in “silence of the seas.” In line 18 we find alliteration in “perhaps the plaintive numbers flow.” Line 27 also has alliteration in “I saw her singing at her work.”

9. In the first Stanza, some words or phrases have been used to show that the girl working in the fields is alone. Which are those words and phrases? What effect do they create in the mind of the reader?

Answer

The words and phrases that have been used to show that the girl working in the fields is alone are ‘single in the field’, ‘solitary’, ‘singing by herself’.

The words and phrases create in the readers mind an image of a lonely Scottish maiden who is reaping and singing all alone in the field. While she is working, she is singing a sad melancholy song. The song is so intense that the poet asks the passersby to listen but to not disturb her.