

# Nature Poetry

READING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_3047R\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English





## Goals

- Can read, understand and compare two literary poems by Emily Dickinson and William Wordsworth.
  
- Can identify and explain the techniques employed by the poets and present my own views on the two works.







## English poets

Which English poets have you heard of before? Have you ever heard of William Wordsworth or Emily Dickinson? What do you know already about English poets and poetry?





## City or countryside?

Do you live in the city or the countryside? Where did you grow up and where do you feel most at home? What are the advantages and disadvantages of urban and rural life?



environment

social

transport

nature



## Romanticism

**What do you already  
know about  
Romanticism? There  
are some clues  
below!**

arts movement

*inspiration*

sublime

*the individual*

nature



## I wandered lonely as a cloud (Wordsworth)



I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er **vales** and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
**Fluttering** and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the **margin** of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
**Tossing** their heads in **sprightly** dance.



## I wandered lonely as a cloud (Wordsworth)



The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in **glee**:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a **jocund** company:  
I gazed- and gazed- but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in **pensive** mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.



## Match each new word to its corresponding picture

1. margin

5. glee

2. to toss

6. fluttering/ to flutter

3. vale

7. sprightly

4. jocund

8. pensive

A



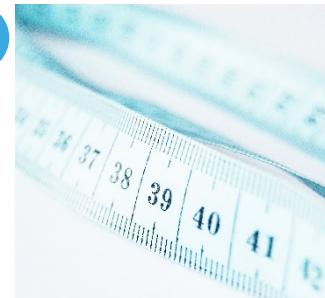
C



E



G



B



D



F



H





## A modern day poem

'I wandered lonely as a cloud...' uses poetic language to talk about the poet's memorable walk in nature. Can you tell the story of the poem in modern language? Go through the poem verse by verse and give a modern day translation!





## Fond memories

**Read the last stanza of the poem again. How is this walk significant to the poet's life? Are there any of your own memories that fulfil a similar purpose for you?**

“

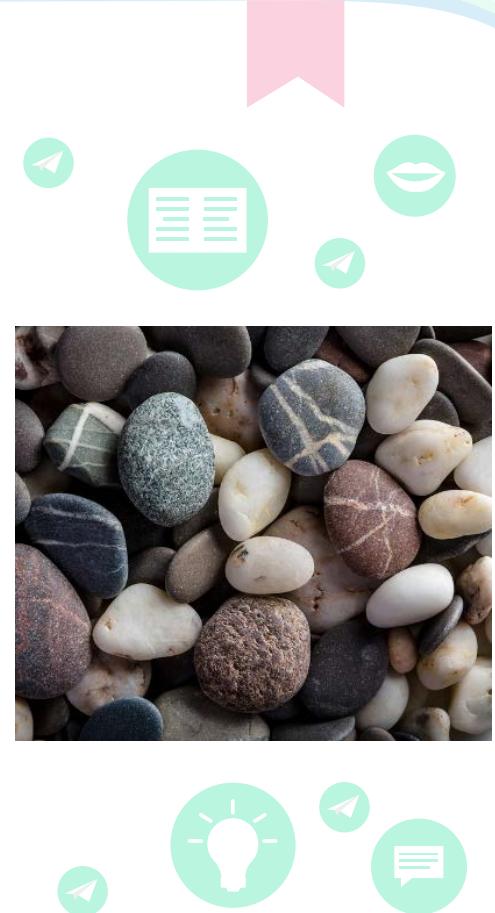
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

”



## XXXIII (Dickinson)

HOW happy is the little stone  
That **rambles** in the road alone,  
And doesn't care about careers,  
And **exigencies** never fears;  
Whose coat of elemental brown  
A passing universe put on;  
And independent as the sun,  
Associates or glows alone,  
Fulfilling absolute decree  
In casual simplicity.





## Nature, the gentlest mother (Dickinson)



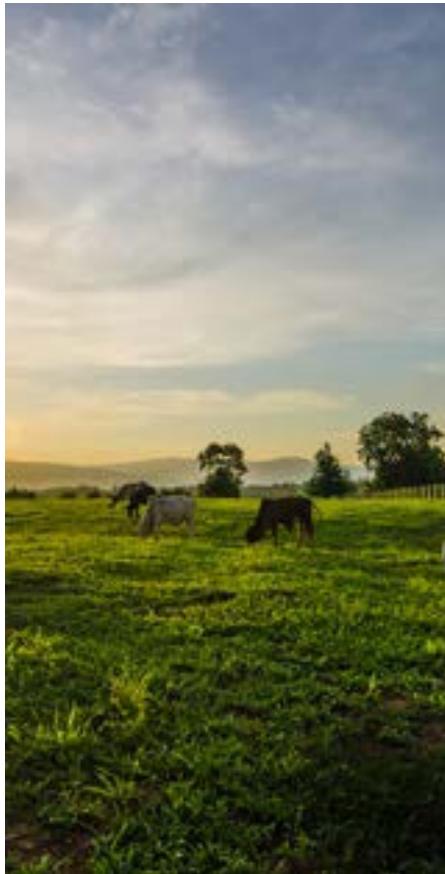
Nature, the gentlest mother,  
Impatient of no child,  
The **feeblest** or the **waywardest**, —  
Her **admonition mild**

In forest and the hill  
By traveller is heard,  
Restraining rampant squirrel  
Or too **impetuous** bird.

How fair her conversation,  
A summer afternoon, —  
Her household, her assembly;  
And when the sun goes down



## Nature, the gentlest mother (Dickinson)



Her voice among the **aisles**  
Incite the timid prayer  
Of the **minutest** cricket,  
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep  
She turns as long away  
As will suffice to light her lamps;  
Then, bending from the sky

With infinite affection  
And infiniter care,  
Her golden finger on her lip,  
Wills silence everywhere.



## New vocabulary: find a synonym or short definition

mild	a difficult situation
to ramble	out of control
minute	warning
wayward	weak
impetuous	walkway, path
feeble	slight
exigency	reckless
aisle	tiny
admonition	to wander





## Vocabulary review: language of comparison and contrast

while

whereas

as opposed to

rather than

compared to/with

similarly

likewise

just as

in the same way



## Emily Dickinson and nature



Reflect on the two poems you have just read by Emily Dickinson. How is nature portrayed in each poem? What associations with nature do you find in each poem?



Get ready to compare

**Do you notice  
anything in  
common between  
Wordsworth's and  
Dickinson's poems?**



## Comparison

**Look at the last stanza of Wordsworth's 'I wandered lonely as a cloud...' again and compare it to the selected parts of Dickinson's XXXIII. What do they have in common? How are they different?**

||

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

||

||

How happy is the little stone  
That rambles in the road alone,  
And doesn't care about careers,  
And exigencies never fears; (...)  
Fulfilling absolute decree  
In casual simplicity.

||

## personification

**Personification** is a poetic technique which attributes human **characteristics, emotions** and **feelings** to **inanimate objects, ideas**, or things which cannot feel.



The clouds were **crying**.



The leaves on the trees **laughed** as I walked past.



## Personification

**Answer the following questions about personification in the poems you have read so far.**



1

Go back through the three poems you have read so far.  
Pick out all of the examples of personification.

2

Why do you think the poets use personification in these poems? What effect does it have?

3

The third poem, 'Nature, the gentlest mother', talks about the idea of Mother Nature. What kind of character is she?  
How is this idea of Mother Nature personified?



## I taste a liquor never brewed... (Dickinson)



I taste a **liquor** never **brewed** –  
From **tankards** scooped in Pearl –  
Not all the vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an Alcohol!

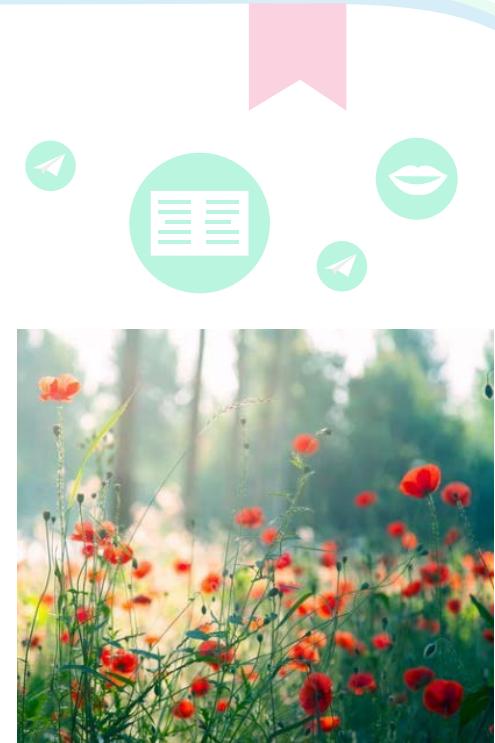
**Inebriate** of air – am I –  
And **debauchee** of **Dew** –  
**Reeling** – thro' endless summer days –  
From inns of **molten** Blue –



## I taste a liquor never brewed... (Dickinson)

When “landlords” turn the drunken bee  
Out of the foxglove’s door –  
When butterflies – renounce their “**drams**” –  
I shall but drink the more!

Till **seraphs** swing their snowy Hats –  
And saints – to windows run –  
To see the little **tippler**  
Leaning against the – sun!





## She Dwelt Among The Untrodden Ways (Wordsworth)



She dwelt among the **untrodden** ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
**Maid** whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love:

A violet by a **mossy** stone  
Half hidden from the eye!  
---**Fair** as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy **ceased** to be;  
But she is in her grave, and, oh,  
The difference to me!



## Match the new vocabulary with its definition on the following page

untrodden

maid

mossy

fair

to cease

seraphs

to reel

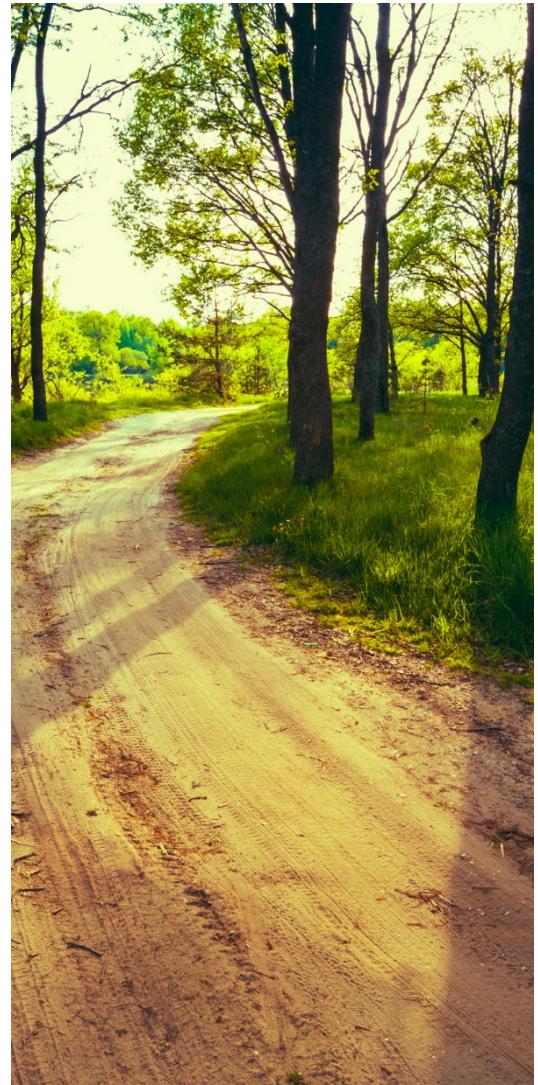
molten

dew



## New vocabulary: definitions

1. An old-fashioned name for an unmarried woman.
2. A synonym for 'to stop'.
3. A form of walking, usually unsteady. It might look like the person is going to fall.
4. An old fashioned word for beautiful.
5. Something which has not been walked on.
6. Covered in a soft, green plant.
7. Drops of water that form on things from condensation at night.
8. Highest ranked angels.
9. Something in a liquid state because of intense heat.





## Vocabulary review

The vocabulary below all relates to alcohol. Some of the words are very old fashioned. Why do you think these words are used to create imagery in Dickinson's 'I taste a liquor never brewed'?





## Tone and outlook

**Do you notice any similarities between 'I taste a liquor never brewed' and any of the other poems you have read so far? Choose one poem and compare the two. Think about tone and outlook.**





## The meaning behind the words

**Read back over Wordsworth's poem, 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways'.**



**1**

What is this poem about?

**2**

What is the tone of the poem? Happy? Sad?  
Regretful? Celebratory? Wistful? Mournful?  
Discuss.

**3**

How is nature used in this poem? Is it similar or different to the poems you have read so far?



## Nature and spirituality



'She dwelt among the untrodden ways' uses nature in a more spiritual way than the other poems.

Do you agree with this statement? Why (not)?



## Wordsworth and Dickinson

**Read the information about Wordsworth and Dickinson in the boxes below. Think about the poems you have read, what differences can you see in the work of these two poets, how do you think their lives might have influenced their poetry? Think about style and tone. Think also about the role that nature plays in their poetry.**

William Wordsworth was born in the beautiful Lake District in England in 1770. Both of his parents died while he was young and this experience greatly shaped him. He spent a lot of time travelling in Europe and this experience formed his political views and made him want to write poetry that was accessible not just to intellectuals but to ordinary people. He is considered one of the greatest poets of the Romantic period.

Emily Dickinson was born in 1830 in Massachusetts, USA. She lived a very secluded and reclusive life. Though she was a passionate writer from a young age, she was not recognised as a poet in her lifetime. Dickinson kept her writing quite secret and her poetry was only discovered after her death, by her sister. In her spare time, Dickinson studied botany.



## General comparison

**Have you read any other nature poetry? How does it compare to the poems you have read in this lesson? Do you think the poetry you have read in this class would be 'typical' nature poetry?**



portrayal of nature

in relation to  
humankind?

similar tone?



## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!



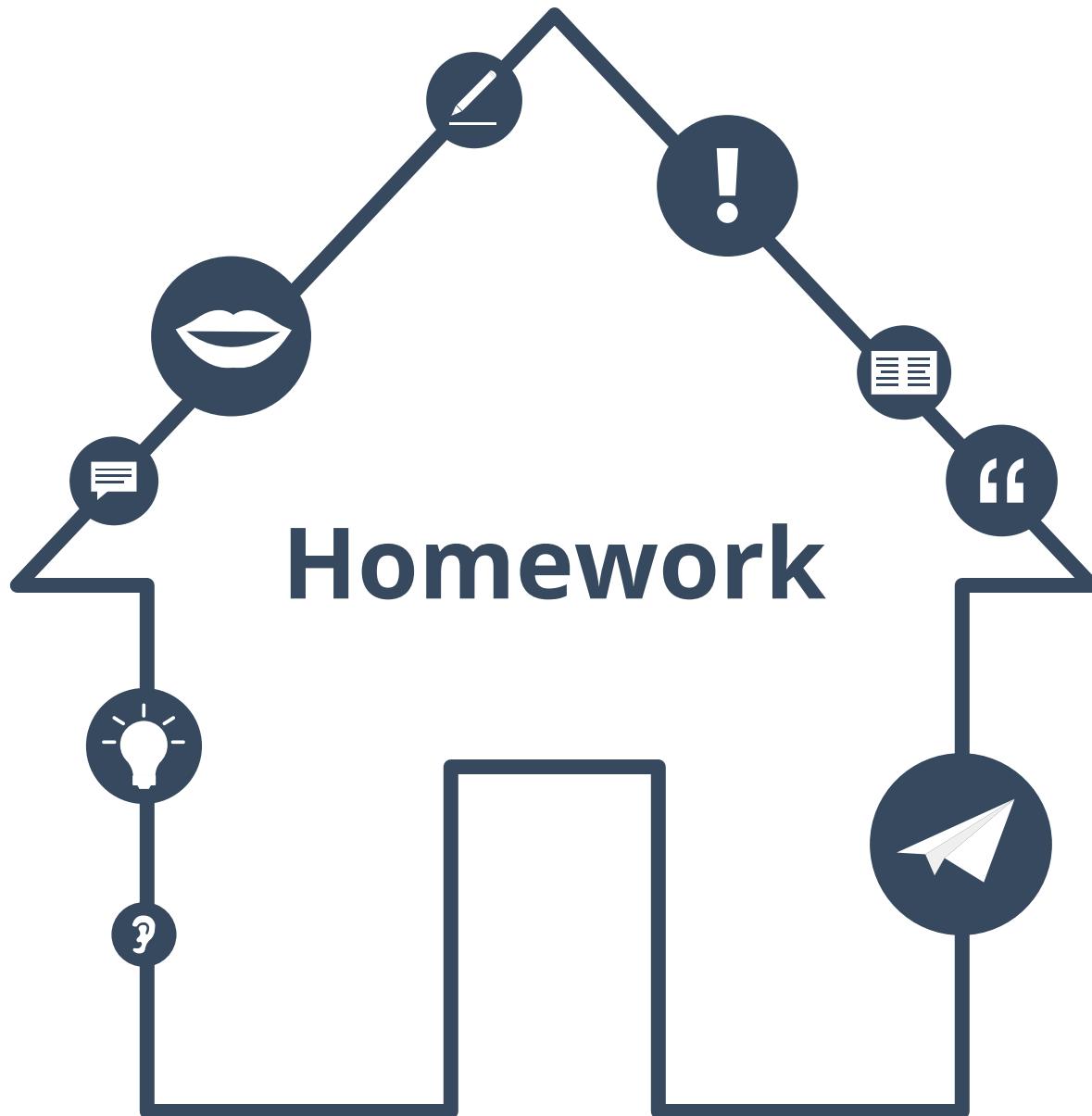


## Answer key

Exercise p. 9  
1G, 2D, 3H, 4A, 5F, 6C, 7E, 8B

Exercise p. 15  
Mild - slight, to ramble - to wander, minute - tiny, wayward - out of control,  
impetuous - reckless, feeble - weak, exigency - difficult situation, aisle - walkway,  
path, admonition - warning.

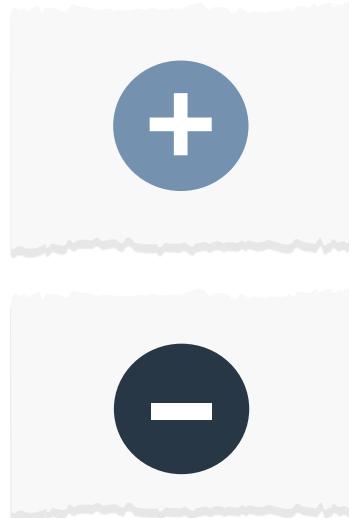
Exercise p. 26  
1: maid, 2: to cease, 3: to reel, 4: fair, 5: untrodden, 6: mossy, 7: dew, 8: seraph, 9:  
molten.





## Reflect on the lesson

How did you find this class? Which parts did you find most challenging? Which parts did you find easiest? Give your feedback here.

A vertical column of ten small white circles aligned to the left of a series of ten horizontal lines for writing feedback.



## Poetry and you

William Wordsworth's poem, 'I wandered lonely as a cloud', is one of the most famous poems in the English language. Think of a famous poem in your native language. What is the poem about? Why do you think it has resonated with people? What is about certain poems that makes them so powerful? Discuss below.




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