

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam

Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883)

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- use pre-reading and while-reading strategies to analyse and explore different layers of meaning
- listen to texts and carefully analyse the situations/events
- examine an author's point of view or purpose in a text
- demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in a whole class setting and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation
- demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- provide an objective summary of a range of texts.
- demonstrate knowledge and application of parts of speech in oral and written communication in varying degrees of complexity.
- comprehend and use contemporary idioms and proverbs in the different texts and in their speech.
- use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase a poem.

Pre-Reading

- a) What do you know about Omar Khayyam?
- b) Does your previous knowledge of poetry help you in understanding about the contents of this poem?

Awake for morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes - or it prospers ; and anon,
Like snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two - is gone.

While-reading

What happens to the worldly hopes of men?

There was a Door to which I found no Key;
There was Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee.
There seem'd-----and then no more of Thee and Me.

The Moving finger writes; and having writ,
Move on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

While-reading

What does the Key mean here?

Yet Ah, that spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet - scented manuscript should close
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Edward Fitzgerald

Post-reading

Do you think the message of the poet has been forcefully conveyed? Discuss.

Notes and Comments

Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883) was an English writer, best known for his Rubaiyat Of Omar Khayyam, which stands on its own as a classic of English Literature. It is one of the most frequently quoted of lyric poems.

Fitzgerald is best known for his translation of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," a collection of Persian poems attributed to the 11th-century poet and mathematician Omar Khayyam. Fitzgerald's translation, first published anonymously in 1859, became immensely popular and is considered a classic of English literature.

Philosophical and lyrical qualities in the translation of Rubaiyat stand out abundantly. It added a distinct Victorian flair in capturing the essence of Khayyam's original work. Fitzgerald's version often focused on themes of mortality, the transience of life, and the pursuit of pleasure in the face of uncertainty.

Fitzgerald's translation gained recognition and acclaim over time, eventually becoming one of the most widely read and celebrated English translations of Persian poetry. It has been appreciated for its beautiful language, evocative imagery, and thought-provoking themes. Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam remains influential and continues to be studied and enjoyed by readers around the world.

Theme

The main theme revolves around the short-lived and fleeting nature of life, the inevitability of death, and the pursuit of pleasure and knowledge. The message is to encourage readers to embrace the present moment, find joy in life's pleasures, and consider the deeper mysteries of existence. Religious belief about life is also there, presenting humans as helpless. Our deeply held beliefs about God and heaven have also been focused. It contains pithy observations on love, death, fate and the existence of God and the afterlife.

The poem remains a timeless work of literature that invites readers to ponder the mysteries of life, love, and the transient nature of human existence.

Glossary

Words	Meanings	Synonyms
awake	to get up from sleep	arise
bowl	basin, drinking vessel	
flung	threw, hurled	
lo	look, see, behold	
Hunter of the East	the sun	
Turret	small tower connected with the building; tower	
Noose of Light	the sun rays	

worldly hope	hope for worldly gains	
Turns ashes	burns to the ground, of no use at all, futile	
prosper	succeed	
soon	presently	
veil	piece of transparent material attached to a woman's head-dress	
past which	beyond which	
the Moving finger	fate, destiny	
writ	written	
moves on	refers to unending appearance of forms	
piety	quality of being pious	
wit	wisdom, intelligence, understanding	
lure	entice, recall	
it	fate, destiny	
tears	sufferings, pain, repentance	
wash out	wipe out	
ah	expression of sorrow	
sweet-scented	pleasant, happy	
should close	should come to an end	
Youth's manuscript	manuscript: a book, document	
nightingale	suggests the spirit of joy and youth	
whence	from where, from what place or source	
whither	to what place or point	

Comprehension

a) Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the overall theme or message of the poem "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam"?
- 2 How does the poem explore the concept of mortality and the fleeting nature of life?
- 3 Highlight the attitude of the poem about fate and destiny.
- 4 Explain the way the idea of 'Seize the moment' is expressed in the poem.
- 5 Discuss the role of nature in Rubaiyat. How does Khayam use natural imagery to convey his ideas?
- 6 How does the poem portray the relationship between the individual and the universe?
- 7 Name the only certain thing in life.
- 8 What is the narrative perspective used in the poem?

b) Figurative Language

"The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" is filled with rich imagery, metaphors, and poetic devices. Here are some of the prominent poetic devices used in "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam":

Metaphor: Metaphors are used to convey abstract ideas in vivid and imaginative ways. For example, "The moving finger writes, and having writ, Moves on" employs the metaphor of a moving finger to represent the passage of time and the inevitability of fate.

Simile: Similes are comparisons that use "like" or "as" to create vivid imagery. An example from the Rubaiyat is "Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face, / Lighting a little Hour or two— is gone." Here, the fleeting nature of life is compared to snow melting on the desert's surface.

Rhyme: Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds at the end of lines. The Rubaiyat is known for its quatrain structure/ The rhyme scheme adds a musical quality to the verses.

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is the use of exaggerated statements or claims for emphasis or dramatic effect. The Rubaiyat employs hyperbole to emphasize the fleetingness of life and the inevitability of death. For example, "The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon / Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon, / Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face, / Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone."

The poem is rich in its use of language and imagery, providing a thought-provoking exploration of themes such as life, love, mortality, and the pursuit of pleasure.

Paradox: A paradox is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory but may reveal a deeper truth. In Rubaiyat paradoxical statements are used to explore complex philosophical themes. For instance, "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, / Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit / Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, / Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it." This paradoxical statement reflects on the inevitability of time and the inability to change the past.

These various poetic devices and elements contribute to the beauty, depth, and contemplative nature of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam." The poem remains a timeless work of literature that invites readers to ponder the mysteries of life, love, and the transient nature of human existence.

Oral Communication

Attentive Listening Skill

1. Discuss the meanings of the following lines taken from the poem.
'Look to the Rose'. What is its significance?
'Like snow upon the Desert's dusty face/Lighting a little Hour or two----is gone----'
2. What does it refer to?
'Ah, whence and whither flown again, who knows—discuss the mood of the line and underlying questions'.

Inference

1. How would you justify that man is the architect of his own fate?
2. Can lamenting over misfortune do any good to us for the years to come? Discuss.

Grammar and Language

a) Parts of Speech

Verb: A verb is a word that describes what the subject of a sentence is doing. Verbs can indicate (physical or mental) actions, occurrences, and states of being.

Verbs Types	Definition	Example
Linking Verbs	Connects the subject to a noun, pronoun, or adjective	The flowers smell sweet.
Auxiliary Verbs	Helps the main verb express tense, mood, or voice	She is going to the party.
Action Verbs	Expresses an action that the subject is doing.	The dog chased the cat.
Helping Verbs	Helps the main verb in a sentence.	I should have studies for the test.
many	Expresses necessity, possibility, ability.	She can speak Spanish fluently.
Tra. Verbs	Takes an object in a sentence	The student wrote an essay.
Intra. Verbs	Does not take an object in a sentence	The bird sings in the morning.
Regular Verbs	Forms past tense and past participle by adding "-ed"	He walked to the store yesterday.
Irregular Verbs	Forms past tense and past participle irregularly	She ate breakfast this morning. (past tense of "eat")

Activity : Use each type of verb to make a complete sentence.

Linking verb _____
 Auxiliary verb _____
 Action verb _____
 Helping verb _____
 Transitive verb _____
 Intransitive verb _____
 Regular verb _____
 Irregular verb _____

Note: Auxiliary verbs and Helping verbs are essentially the same. They are further divided into Primary auxiliary verbs and Modal auxiliary verbs.

Primary Auxiliary verbs work together with main verb to create different verb forms "do", "have", "be".

Example: I do not understand his instructions.

They have already left for the function.

Modal auxiliary verbs are used with a main verb to express possibility, ability, permission, necessity.

Example: She can complete all these tests alone.

The discovery ride may be dangerous.

You should help others.

It might rain today.

can	could	may
might	must	shall
should	will	would
ought (to)	need (to)	have (to)

b) Comprehend and use contemporary idioms and proverbs in the different texts and in their speech

Proverbs are traditional sayings that are particular to a certain country. They are short, wise sayings that usually offer some kind of advice, or capture an idea found in life.

Native English speakers frequently use proverbs in their conversations, and they often do this without even realizing it. Proverbs sometimes reveal more about the culture of a country than

any textbook can. The values of the population are reflected in its proverbs.

Most popular proverbs in English

There are probably a thousand proverbs out there, so we curate this list of the most popular need-to-know proverbs in English.

1. Many hands make light work

When many people work together to accomplish a difficult task, it doesn't seem so difficult. That is the general meaning of this English proverb. In other words, if people work together, the work is easier and is completed more quickly.

2. Strike while the iron is hot

This proverb means that you should take advantage of a favorable situation before it changes.

3. Honesty is the best policy

It is best to always be honest and tell the truth. By doing so, you will win the trust and respect of others.

4. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence

Other people's lives always seem better, happier, and more successful than yours, even if your life is going well.

5. Don't judge a book by its cover

Don't form an opinion or make a judgment about someone or something based on its outward appearance.

6. An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Since apples are rich in vitamin C - which is vital to our health - this proverb means that proper nutrition contributes to good health and fewer visits to the doctor. In this English proverb, apples are a symbol of healthy foods and proper nutrition.

7. Better late than never

It is better to do something late than not do it at all.

8. Don't bite the hand that feeds you

Don't treat badly the person or people on whom you depend on, or who take care of you in some way.

9. Rome wasn't built in a day

Time is needed to do great or important things.

10. Actions speak louder than words

A person's true character can be seen by what he does, not by what he says. A person can talk as much as he wants, but he may not actually do anything to back up his words.

11. It's no use crying over spilled milk

This funny English proverb means you shouldn't waste time crying or complaining about something bad that has happened that cannot be changed.

12. Still waters run deep

This is said about a person who tends to be quiet and does not say much. Such a person often has a "deep," interesting personality.

13. Curiosity killed the cat

You could be harmed by being too curious about or too interested in something that doesn't concern you.

14. My hands are tied

This saying is not to be taken literally. It has a different meaning. It means that a person is unable to change things or render help in a given situation.

15. Out of sight, out of mind

When you don't see or hear about something, you tend to forget about it.

Activity: Use the above given proverbs in your sentences.

Writing

a) Objective Summary

How to Write an Objective Summary

Step 1	Identify the text and the author.
Step 2	Choose a verb that fits with the text. (shows, describe, explains, discusses, lists, explores, illustrates, teaches, compares, states)
Step 3	Name the theme or central idea.
Step 4	Identify transition words to include in your summary.
Step 5	Choose 3-5 key details from the text that support the theme. Then, put it into your own words.
Step 6	Write your objective summary. (free of personal thoughts)

Activity: Provide an objective summary of a range of Rubaiyat Of Omar Khayam.

Paraphrasing Skills

To paraphrase a poem means to rewrite the poem using your own words. A paraphrased poem is not a summary. Instead, you are going through the poem line by line and rewriting each line completely in your own words. Be careful not to simply substitute synonyms. That is not true paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing skills are all about expressing someone else's ideas in your own words. It's a superpower for writers because it lets you avoid plagiarism and showcase your understanding of a topic. Here are some tips to sharpen your paraphrasing skills:

- **Grasp the meaning first:** Before you rewrite, make sure you understand the original content thoroughly.
- **Thesaurus time:** Synonyms are your friends! Swap out words with similar meanings while keeping the core idea intact.
- **Sentence makeover:** Play with sentence structure. Change active voice to passive or vice versa. Break up long sentences or combine short ones for a fresh look.
- **Mix and match:** Don't be afraid to combine techniques. Use synonyms, change sentence structure, and maybe even reorder the information to create a truly unique paraphrase.
- **Double check:** After paraphrasing, compare it to the original to ensure you've captured the essence without copying.

Activity: Paraphrase the "Rubaiyat Of Omar Khayam" stanza wise.

Teacher's Note

- Ask students to examine an author's point of view or purpose in a text
- Encourage them to demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in a whole class setting and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation
- Help them to demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Motivate them to provide an objective summary of a range of texts.
- Ask them to demonstrate knowledge and application of parts of speech in oral and written communication in varying degrees of complexity.
- Let them comprehend and use contemporary Idioms and proverbs in the different texts and in their speech.
- Encourage them to use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase a poem.