The Solitary Reaper

William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850)

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- use pre-reading and while-reading strategies to analyze and explore different layers of meaning within texts
- demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in the whole class setting and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation
- listen to texts and critically analyze the situations/events
- evaluate two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis.

Use summary skills to

1. extract salient points and develop a mind map to summarize a variety of informational texts.
2. transfer the written text to a table, diagram, flowchart or work plan.

- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text
- demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience
- use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase a poem
- provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and support the argument presented
- write formal letters and emails to people in extended academic (professional) environments for various purposes

Pre-Reading

a) Can you think of any other poem of Wordsworth in comparison to this poem? Discuss.

b) Is it true that Wordsworth's poetry brings appreciation of nature to the mind of the reader? Describe.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

> **While-reading**
> Who is the woman in the poem and what is she doing?

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

> **While-reading**
> Does the poet understand the reaper's song in 'The Solitary Reaper'?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth

Post-reading

Do you think the music of the song has given infinite consolation to the poet?

Notes and Comments

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was born in the lake District of Northern England. Wordsworth was one of the leading figures of English Romanticism, an artistic and intellectual movement that swept across Europe at the end of the 18th century. The classical poets did not have much respect for nature and the common man, but Wordsworth took up new subjects of poetry. His adoration of nature and common simple life were things of Romantic character.

His poetry is for common people, reading it, people feel that it is happening to us too, and can relate it to their own lives.

The year 1793 saw the first publication of poems by Wordsworth, in the collections An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches.

Together Wordsworth and Coleridge produced Lyrical Ballads (1798), an important work in the English Romantic Movement.

Most famous poems, "Tintern Abbey", published in this collection, along with Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner".

William Wordsworth was the central figure in the English Romantic revolution. His contribution to it was that he formulated in his poems and essays a new attitude towards nature. This was more than a matter of introducing nature imagery into his verse. Secondly, Wordsworth placed poetry at the centre of human experience. In impassioned rhetoric he pronounced poetry to be nothing less than "the first and last of all knowledge---it is as immortal as the heart of man". Then he went on to create some of the greatest English poetry of his century.

He died of Pleurisy on April 23rd, 1850 at the age of 88 in United Kingdom.

Http://www.britannica.com

Themes

Themes of the poem 'The Solitary Reaper" by William Wordsworth revolve around the power of nature, the beauty of simplicity, and the significance of solitary experiences.

Isolation and solitude: The poem highlight the solitary existence of the reaper in the field, emphasizing her separation from society. This solitude can be seen as both a source of tranquility and a cause for loneliness.

Connection to Nature: The reaper's song, which is an unknown language to the speaker, is a direct expression of her connection to nature. The poem suggests that nature has a profound and universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers.

Transient Moments of Beauty: Wordsworth captures a fleeting moment of beauty in nature, emphasizing the transient nature of human existence. The beauty of the reaper's song is compared to that of a nightingale or a cuckoo, evoking a sense of wonder and admiration.

The Power of Memory: The speaker reflects on the experience long after it has passed, suggesting the enduring power of memory to evoke emotions and sensations. The memory of the reaper's song continues to resonate with the speaker, demonstrating the lasting impact of solitary moments in nature.

Overall: "The Solitary Reaper" celebrates the simplicity and beauty of solitary experiences in nature while also exploring themes of isolation, connection, and the passage of time.

Glossary

Words	Meanings	Synonyms
solitary	alone, without companions	alone
lass	an unmarried girl or a young woman	
melancholy	depression, gloomy state of mind-	
strain	stress, anxiety	
vale	valley	
profound	deep, penetrating	
chaunt	chorus	
plaintiv	expressing sorrow, sad	
sickle	nourish	

Oral Communication

Demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in the whole class setting and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation

1. Group discussion can be held among the students for better understanding of the poem.

The word 'solitary' clearly indicates the loneliness in the atmosphere; the Scottish girl singing all alone while cutting the grain.

2. Discuss the singing of the cuckoo-bird/nightingale in the Arabian desert. What possibly can be the significance?

3. Give your views that what is the song of the girl about.

4. It looked like her song would never end, as she was singing while bending over to cut the wheat with a sickle. Comment if you think she was more absorbed in cutting wheat or singing a song.

5. What possibly could be the reason that the narrator kept listening her song without *moving*; specially when he was not understanding the language.

Inference

a) How would you justify that music and song enhance the mood of the listener?

b) Does the silence of the sea create silence in the atmosphere?

Comprehension

1. Who is the solitary reaper? Where does the poet encounter the solitary reaper?

2. How does the speaker describe the girl's song? What emotions does it evoke in him?

3. What inspired the poet to write "The Solitary Reaper"?

4. Give reason of Wordsworth's comparison of the solitary reaper's song to that of the nightingale in the poem "The Solitary Reaper".

5. Who is the poet addressing when he says: stop here, or gently pass?

6. Give reasons of the narrator not understanding the song sung by the Scottish girl.

7. Do you think the speaker suggests that poetry's power lies less in its content and more in its rhythm? Relate it with the content.

8. In what way is the nightingale's song 'welcome' and the cuckoo's song 'thrilling'?

9. Discuss the central theme of the poem.

10. How does the poet show the reaper's song had a lasting effect on him?

11. Evaluate two or more central ideas of this poem and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis.

12. Extract salient points and develop a mind map to summarize a variety of information in the poem.

13. Transfer the written text of the poem into a flowchart or work plan.

Vocabulary

1. Circle the correct option.

The speaker describes the Highland girl as:

    a)   Joyful and carefree   b)   Solitary and melancholic

    c)   Energetic and enthusiastic   d)   Content and peaceful

The speaker uses the word 'overflowing' to describe:

    a)   The amount of grain the girl has harvested

    b)   The beauty of the surrounding landscape

    c)   The abundance of wildlife in the valley

    d)   The volume of the girl's song

The speaker mentions 'the farthest Hebrides' to emphasize;

    a)   The vastness of the ocean   b)   The girl's isolation and loneliness

    c)   The power of music to travel far and wide

    d)   The cultural diversity of Scotland

The phrase' the plaintive numbers flow' suggests that the girl's song is:

    a)   Upbeat and cheerful   b)   Slow and mournful

    c)   Loud and passionate   d)   Fast and lively

The speaker says he listened to the song 'motionless and still' to:

    a)   Show respect for the girl's talent

    b)   Avoid disturbing the girl's concentration

    c)   Focus all his attention to the song

    d)   Show his own fatigue from the journey

The speaker's final statement, 'Long after it was heard no more' implies that;

    a)   He forgot the song quickly   b)   He missed the girl's singing dearly

    c)   He was grateful for the temporary experience

    d)   He was disappointed by the song's ending

Grammar and Language

The poetic devices used in the poem 'The Solitary Reaper'.

- **Hyperbole and Alliteration**

Hyperbole is an exaggeration for effect, while alliteration is the repetition of initial sounds. Examples of alliteration in the poem 'The solitary Reaper' are in the phrases, 'No Nightingale", 'Among Arabian'. 'Silence of the Seas'. In each of these phrases, the initial sound is repeated, which is the technique of alliteration.

According to the poet, solitary reaper's song can be heard 'breaking the silence of the seas, Among the farthest Hebrides. The Hebrides are an island along the northern coast of Scotland, which means that her voice was travelling for miles and miles, which is exaggeration of hyperbole.

- **Metaphor**

The poet uses metaphors to compare the reaper's song to the nightingale's and cuckoo's song, highlighting the beauty and impact of her singing.

- **Enjambment**

The poet uses enjambment to create a flowing, continuous feel to the poem, much like the unbroken song of the reaper.

- **Imagery**

Imagery used in a literary work enables the readers to perceive things involving their five senses.

Example: 'Reaping and singing by herself', 'I saw her singing at her work', and 'More welcome notes to weary bands', gives a pictorial description of the young woman at work.

Writing

a) Questions related to the poem

1. How do you think the reaper's song creates a connection across linguistic and cultural boundaries?
2. Describe the reason the speaker imagines what the reaper might be singing about?
3. Write the summary of the poem 'The Solitary Reaper'.
4. Write in detail how does the atmosphere of the poem and the song of the girl leave a lasting impression on the mind of the poet.

b) Formal letters and emails to people in extended academic (professional) environments for various purposes

Email Writing

Writing professional emails in the workplace

What is email communication?

Electronic mail (e-mail) is a computer-based application for the exchange of messages between users. A worldwide e-mail network allows people to exchange e-mail messages very quickly. E-mail is the electronic equivalent of a letter, but with advantages in timeliness and flexibility.

When to send an email?

Email is one of many available communication technologies in the workplace. In general,

email is good for positive or neutral news and sharing information. Sometimes other methods of communication (face-to-face, phone, instant messaging, video conferencing, etc.) may be more appropriate.

Types of email in the workplace

There are two primary types of email in the workplace:

Request-and-Reply Emails: Most emails in the workplace fall into this category. Request emails usually expect a reply. This kind of email could ask questions, specify tasks people need to complete, or ask colleagues to acknowledge or comment on policies, meetings, or projects.

Confirmation Emails: This kind of email creates a permanent, written record of a conversation that has taken place. For example, if you and a colleague discussed collaborating on a project over lunch, you might send them an email with the details of that conversation. This gives you both a record of the conversation and allows for the conversation to continue, if needed.

Essential email components

Subject line

The subject line of your email should offer your reader the purpose of the email, but it should also be brief. If your subject line is vague, people may ignore your email, or it may be sent to the junk/spam folder.

Vague: Budget

Specific: Budget Revision Request

Greeting

Choosing a greeting may appear to be an easy task, but you have to select the appropriate level of formality. Emailing a coworker with whom you are friends to ask a brief question is different from emailing your supervisor with a work-related request. Below are some greetings that straddle different levels of formality:

More formal:

Dear [Name],

Hello [Name],

Good morning/afternoon [Name],

Less formal:

Hi [Name],

Hey [Name],

Body

Depending on how your audience will react to the information in your email, you will need to decide whether to structure your email body using the direct or indirect method of communication. Either way, paragraphs in an email, when there is more than one, should be clear and concise. They are generally much shorter than paragraphs in an academic essay, for example. The Direct Method of Communication Except in the cases listed below, use the direct method of communication when constructing an email. This method is used when your reader is already informed about the subject and/or will already be supportive of the information provided. The content of your email will provide the following pieces of information, in this order:

- Main point/decision/request
- Background or context for the main point of the email (if required)
- Closing paragraph – summary, action items, polite closing

The Indirect Method of Communication

While you want to avoid delivering really bad news by email (face-to-face is the preferred method for sensitive subjects), if you are delivering information that your reader may not immediately support or that they need to be educated about, your email should be structured according to the indirect method of communication. This gives the reader time to consider rationale or background before encountering the main message:

- Background or context for the main point of the email (always included in the indirect method)
- Main point/decision/request
- Closing paragraph – summary, action items, polite closing
- Sign-off

As with the greeting, you need to choose an appropriate sign-off for your audience:

More formal:

Sincerely,

Thanks/Thank you,

Best,

All the best,

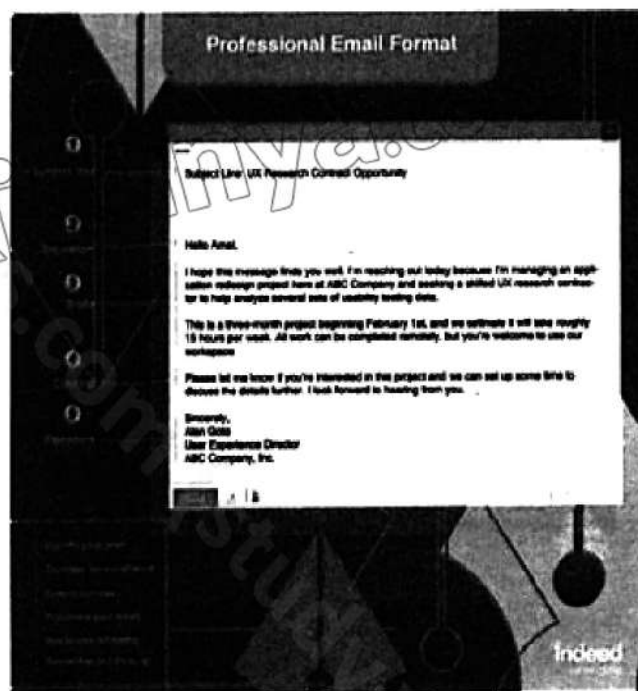Best regards,

Kind regards

Less formal:

Talk soon,

Cheers,

See you,

The Direct Method of Communication

Task: Write an email to the manager of a well-reputed bank and apply against the vacant post of cashier in this bank. Tell him briefly about your work experience and future aims.

Professional Email Format

Teacher's Note:

- Ask students to evaluate two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis.
- Encourage them to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Help them to demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Motivate them to write emails to people in extended academic (professional) environments for various purposes.