

The Darkling Thrush (Poem)

Thomas Hardy

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- ask and answer higher-order questions to guide/assess reading(e.g., Why is the author saying this right now? Why did the author choose this word? How is this different from what I read somewhere else?
- use pre-reading and while-reading strategies to analyse and explore different layers of meaning within texts including biases and opinions.
- evaluate the particular elements of a story or drama (e.g., how the setting shapes the characters or plot).
- Identify rhyme schemes and figurative language in poems
- 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.
- demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in groups and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation.
- comprehend and use contemporary Idioms and proverbs in the different texts and in their speech.
- identify and use adjectival, prepositional and adverbial phrases in reading and writing tasks.
- use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase a poem.
- use summary skills to write an objective summary of the given text and poems

Pre-Reading

- Guess theme of the poem after reading the poem?
- Name any other poem of Thomas Hardy that you have read.

Reading

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-grey,
 And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
 And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse out leant,
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,
 The wind his death-lament.
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
 And every spirit upon earth
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
 The bleak twigs overhead
 In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited;
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

While-reading

- What seemed good-night favorite like him?



Thomas Hardy He was a novelist and poet, born on 2 June 1840, and died on 11 January 1928. He was a Victorian realist, following in the footsteps of George Eliot. In his novels and poetry, he was a strong advocate of Romanticism, particularly William Wordsworth's poetry. He was strongly critical of much of Victorian society, particularly the degradation of Britain's rural people, particularly those from his home county of South West England.

Post-reading

- Discuss the ideas you imagined after reciting this poem.
- What did tremble through air?

Theme: The main topic of 'The Darkling Thrush' is the hopelessness of modern temperament. In the poem, Hardy describes the death of an old world in a lyrical and descriptive way, but he cannot replace it with a new one. Something is finished, everything has changed, civilization is gone, and he does not know what is going to replace it. At first glance, the poem seems to be about change, the passage of time, and seeing things from a different point of view. In 'The Darkling Thrush', Thomas Hardy portrays nature as uninterested in the existence of humanity and its sufferings. The tragedy of the nineteenth century is the loss of hope due to the lack of faith in any other positive force.

Summary: The 'Darkling Thrush' is a poem written by Thomas Hardy on December 31st, 1900, the final day of the nineteenth century. The poem is about the despair and hopelessness of the final days of the nineteenth century and the uncertainty of the twenty-first century. The speaker describes a bleak winter landscape, with cold and frost, and the barrenness of the land. The speaker mourns the cruelty of this season and the emptiness of the world. In the midst of this bleak landscape, the speaker hears the singing of a thrush perched on a twisted tree. It is a strange and unexpected sound to hear in such a bleak environment, but the thrush's song is filled with joy and vitality. The speaker is touched by the bird's resilience and the hope it brings to the world, even in the darkest of times. In the last line of the poem, the speaker ponders what the thrush's song means to him. He understands that the bird's song is a sign of hope. It is a sign of life's resilience, a sign of hope in a world that is so dark and uncertain. The poem concludes with the speaker recognizing that the thrush is a symbol of hope and optimism.



Glossary

Given below are the difficult words from the unit. Look at their meanings and give synonyms of each in the given column.

Words	Meanings	Synonyms
bine-stems	shoots from a climbing plant.	
blast-beruffled plume	feathers which have been made to stand up (been ruffled) by the wind (blast)	

carolling	sounds, singing songs.
coppice	an area of densely growing small trees.
death-lament	sorrowful sounds(such as the willing that takes place when somebody dies)
desolate	dismal and gloomy
dregs	the last remaining and least attractive part of something (here ,the Winter and the Century)
fervourless	without any intensity of emotion or belief; cold
gaunt	thin and bony
illimited	unlimited ,without limits
lyre	a stringed musical instrument
nigh	near in place or time
outlean	spread out
spectre	a ghostly presence
terrestrial	of the earth (not the air)



Reading and Critical Thinking

Answer these questions.

1. How does the poet describe the winter?
2. How is the song of the thrush described?
3. Which old-fashioned words are used in the poem?
4. Do you find the poem gloomy? Is there a note of hope in it? Discuss.
5. Find out the symbolic significance of the bird in Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush."
6. What are examples of imagery used in "The Darkling Thrush"?
7. How does the speaker feel about the season in "The Darkling Thrush"?
8. How does the thrush change the mood of the poem?
9. Discuss the tone of the poem.
10. Which words does the poet use to depict the bird's strength in third stanza?

b) Choose the best answer.

- i. The central theme of this poem describes :
- a) spirituality b) hopelessness of modern temperament
c) bird's life d) pessimism
- ii. The poet of this poem is :
- a) Thomas Hardy b) Robert Louis Stevenson
c) William Blake d) John Keats
- iii. The tragedy of the nineteenth century is the _____ due to the lack of faith in any other positive force.:
- a) loss of strength b) loss of hope c) loss of emotions

Intonation: Intonation is a variation of spoken pitch in linguistics that isn't used to distinguish words. Instead, it's used to indicate the speaker's attitude and emotions, to tell the difference between statement and question, and to differentiate between different types of question, to focus attention on important parts of the spoken message, and to regulate conversation. This is in contrast to tone, which in some languages uses pitch variation to distinguish words, either word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence (yes/no question, request for repetition, greeting, etc.). In this example, the main movement of the sentence is still at the tone of the Tonic, but this time, the voice descends on the Tonic, then rises. You use this pattern to ask questions that require an answer of "Yes" or "No".

I bought some food. Did you buy some food?

I saw a burglar. Did you see a burglar?

Practice these dialogues.

Yes/No questions

Are you alone?

Can I come in?

May I sit down?

Are you sure?

Greetings

A: Hello, Faiza!

B: Good morning, Doctor.

Requests for repetition

What did you say?

When did all this happen?

Which pills did you take?

How did you get in?

Activity

Search any other poem of Thomas Hardy and recite it in the class following the intonation pattern.

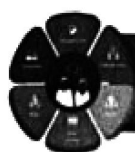
c) In unit 3, figurative language is discussed in detail. Now find the figures of speech in the poem 'The Darkling Thrush'.

d) Elements of Poetry

MOOD Reader's feelings TONE Author's feelings toward poem subject	SYMBOLISM When something represents or stands for something else	METER The rhythm or beat established by a poem	RHYME Words have the same ending sound
FIG. LANG. Simile, metaphor, hyperbole, idiom, personification	CONNOTATION (word association) DENOTATION (dictionary meaning)	REPETITION Author repeats a word, line, or phrase for emphasis	ALLITERATION Words have the same beginning sound
IMAGERY Author uses words that appeal to senses (sight, touch, smell, sound, taste)	IRONY The difference between the way something appears and what is actually true	VOICE or P.O.V Who is the narrator? What do we know about them?	ASSONANCE Words have the same middle vowel sound
FORM Cinquain, free verse, haiku, ballad, limerick, sonnet, ode, etc.	STANZA Division of lines into groups	WORD ORDER Author varies word order for meaning and effect.	ONOMOTOPEIA Words formed by imitating the sound they make

Activity: Discuss the tone of the poem.

Find the rhyme scheme and meter in the poem.



Oral Communication

Active Listening Skills

When you are listening to someone, it is important to pay attention to what they are saying. Intonation is a way of changing the pitch of a speech, but it is not used to tell the difference between words. It is used to show the speaker's attitude and emotions, which helps people understand each other better. If you listen carefully, you will be able to get a better understanding of what the speaker is trying to say and how to respond. You can show that you are paying attention by making eye contact, shaking your head, or leaning forward.

Activity: You can practice your listening and speaking skills through these activities:

- Have a casual conversation with someone (this could be a friend, classmate, family member, etc.)
- Listen to a podcast (you could also take notes while listening)
- Practice speaking in a mirror - it may seem strange to talk to yourself, but it can help prepare you for conversations with other people or presentations
- Read aloud - this will help you to pace yourself and speak clearly
- Listen to famous speeches to examine changes in tone, pitch, and intonation



Vocabulary and Grammar

a) Idioms

Idioms	Meaning
Spill the beans	to give away a secret
Under the weather	to feel ill
The ball is in your court	it's up to you
Pull someone's leg	to play a practical joke
Through thick and thin	to be loyal no matter what
Once in a blue moon	rarely
Take it with a pinch of salt	don't take it too seriously
"I've got it in the bag"	secured success
Cold feet	becoming nervous

Proverbs

Proverbs	Meanings
Don't count your chickens before they hatch.	don't expect a positive result before you actually see it
Don't judge a book by its cover	don't judge someone or something by appearance alone
All good things must come to an end	everything ends; good times don't last forever
Don't put all of your eggs in one basket	don't put all of your hopes and resources into one goal or dream
Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today	if you can do something today, do it. Don't wait until tomorrow; don't procrastinate.
Easy come, easy go	when you make money quickly, it's very easy to lose it quickly as well
Fortune favors the bold	people who are brave and who take risks are more successful than people who are do things safely all the time
God helps those who help themselves	don't just wait for good things to happen to you. Work hard to make them happen.
Hope for the best, prepare for the worst	in any situation, be optimistic about the result, but always be ready for the worst outcome

Activity

Use the given idioms and proverbs in your sentences. You can use them in your daily routine writing or in discussion as well.

b) Prepositional Phrase: A prepositional phrase is a group of words consisting of a preposition, its object, and any words that modify the object. Most of the time, a prepositional phrase modifies a verb or a noun. These two kinds of prepositional phrases are called adverbial phrases and adjectival phrases, respectively.

a) Adjective Phrase: An adjective phrase is a phrase that contains an adjective, but there's more to it than that—as a whole, an adjective phrase is a phrase that acts as an adjective by describing a noun. For example:

✓ We experienced the decade's most destructive storm.

✓ They saw only the brightest stars through their telescope.

b) Adverbial phrase: An adverbial phrase (or adverb phrase) is a group of words that acts as an adverb to modify the main clause of a sentence. Adverbial phrases can be made up of two adverbs. These are typically formed by adding a qualifier or intensifier (e.g., "incredibly," "rather," "very," "somewhat") before another adverb.

Activity

Read the following sentences and identify whether the underlined phrases are adjectival, prepositional, or adverbial.

1. The cat with the fluffy tail is my neighbor's pet.

Type of Phrase: _____

2. She walked along the sandy beach at sunset.

Type of Phrase: _____

3. The book on the top shelf is my favorite.

Type of Phrase: _____

4. The car drove quickly through the narrow tunnel.

Type of Phrase: _____

5. The students in the front row listened attentively.

Type of Phrase: _____

6. The concert ended with a spectacular fireworks display.

Type of Phrase: _____

7. She answered the questions with confidence.

Type of Phrase: _____

8. The children played happily in the park all day.

Type of Phrase: _____

9. The house with the red door is for sale.

Type of Phrase: _____

- c) Use the following phrasal verbs in sentences.

end up _____

fall apart _____

fall down _____

fall out _____

figure out _____

fill in _____



Writing

Points to understand a poem.

These key points can help in the understanding and appreciation of poetry.

a) **Theme:** What issues and ideas does a poem deal with?

b) **Persons:** Who is telling the story of the poem? Through whose eyes do we see the characters and the events of the story?

c) **Mood:** What is the governing mood or emotion of the poem?

- d) **Language:** What effects do the metaphors, similes; symbols of the poem have on the reader?
- e) **Rhythm:** Is the rhythm (movement of the poem) slow, steady, and fast?

Activity:

- Keeping in mind above mentioned points and discuss the theme and mood of the poem.
- Use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase the first and third stanza of the poem.
- Summarize the poem "The Darkling Thrush".

Teacher's Point

- Encourage students to demonstrate attentive listening skills while working in groups and taking turns to speak with standard pronunciation.
- Ask them to comprehend and use contemporary Idioms and proverbs in the different texts and in their speech.
- Help them to identify and use adjectival, prepositional and adverbial phrases in reading and writing tasks.
- Ask them to use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase a poem.
- Motivate them to use summary skills to write an objective summary of the given text and poems.