

## Introduction - Elite Drills for Skills Series - Unseen Poetry

These exercises are designed to allow students to practice analysing English poetry. Similar type exercises can be found in the Secondary School curriculums of some Hong Kong elite schools as well as schools all over the world.

The questions give students practice in the following areas:

- ★ General comprehension
- ★ Vocabulary
- ★ Identifying Poetic (literary) language
- ★ Metaphors/Similes/Personification etc
- ★ Imagery
- ★ Rhyming scheme and form
- ★ Themes and messages
- ★ Mood and tone
- ★ Thinking skills

### Instructions for students

1. Refer to the explanation of poetic devices.
2. Print off the blank exercises and attempt them.
3. Check the answers against the answer key.

## Handy Hints - Literary Language/Poetic Devices

<h3>Alliteration</h3>	
Words beginning with the same sound	
Example	The <u>b</u> ouncy <u>b</u> lue <u>b</u> alloon <u>b</u> urst.
<h3>Simile</h3>	
Comparing one thing/person/animal to another using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	
Example	She is as busy as a bee. Her hair was like silk. Like a pearl, her skin shimmered in the sun.
<h3>Metaphor</h3>	
Comparing one thing/person/animal to another <u>without</u> <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> Using one word to represent another word	
Example	Her hair was silk. The snake curled around the mountain. (snake = river)
<h3>Personification</h3>	
Giving something that is not a person or an animal the characteristics of a living thing	
Example	The pen danced across the paper. The happy spoon jumped into the chocolate ice-cream.
<h3>Onomatopoeia</h3>	
Words that sound the same as the way they are spoken, suggesting the meaning	
Example	Crash! Bang! Buzz!
<h3>Imagery</h3>	
Using words (especially using the 5 senses) to paint pictures in the reader's mind	
Example	The sweet smell of cakes baking filled my nose. His cheeks were rose-red. The deafening thunder woke me from my dream.

## Exercise 1

Read the poem and answer the questions in complete sentences.

### Owl

When cats run home and light is come,

And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,

And the whirring sail goes round,

And the whirring sail goes round;

Alone and warming his five wits,

The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,

And raven smells the new-mown hay,

And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,

Twice or thrice his roundelay;

Alone and warming his five wits,

The white owl in the belfry sits.

Vocabulary Hint  
**dumb:** unable to speak  
(silent)

Vocabulary Hint  
**wit:** intelligence (but  
also part of a sound an  
owl makes: tu-wit-tu-wu)

Vocabulary Hint  
**belfry:** the top part of a  
church where the bell is

Poem Hint  
Think of an adjective we  
use to describe owls.

Vocabulary Hint  
**hath:** has

Vocabulary Hint  
**thatch:** a roof made of  
hay

Alfred Tennyson

## Exercise 1 - questions

What is the rhyming scheme of the poem?

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What time of day is the poet describing? Give two clues that tell you.

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Give an example of onomatopoeia from the first stanza.

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What poetic device does the poet use in the third line of the first stanza?

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Why does the poet use the word 'w... '?

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What do you think a 'milkmaid' does?

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Which word in the poem is a noun meaning 'a short song'?

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The poet uses a lot of repetition. Why do you think this is? What does it tell us about life?

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**SAMPLE**

**Exercise 1 - answers**

What is the rhyming scheme of the poem?

The rhyming scheme is ABABBCC.

What time of day is the poet describing? Give two clues that tell you.

The poet is describing dawn. The clues are 'light is come and dew is on the ground'.

Give an example of onomatopoeia from the first stanza.

'Whirring' is an example of onomatopoeia from the first stanza.

What poetic device does the poet use in the third line of the first stanza?

Personification is used in the third line of the first stanza. (stream - dumb - dumb is a human feature)

Why does the poet use the word 'wits'?

The poet uses 'wits' because wits are intelligent and it makes a sound like this. It is a double use of words. (accept any similar answer)

What do you think a 'milkmaid' does?

I think a milkmaid milks the cows in the morning.

Which word in the poem is a noun meaning 'a short song'?

'Roundelay' means 'a short song'.

The poet uses a lot of repetition. Why do you think this is? What does it tell us about life?

Events in life and nature repeat over and over again every day. Life goes on in a constant cycle. This is the reason for the repetition. (accept any similar answer)