

Pathways to Literature

Virginia Evans – Jenny Dooley

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963),
Irish novelist & poet



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Introduction

Types of literature

Poetry

Poetry is any kind of written text that focuses on sound. Poems are written in lines and stanzas (sets of lines). The syllables and words in a poem are put together in a specific way, giving it a particular rhythm called a **meter** – though there are poems that are free of form and may not have a regular meter. *If* by Rudyard Kipling is an example of a poem with a meter; *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot an example of one without. Sonnets and epic poems like the *Iliad* by Homer are also types of poems.

Prose

Prose is any kind of written text that isn't poetry. The most common types of prose are novels and short stories, while other types include biographies, memoirs, diaries, and journals. Prose is written in complete sentences and organized in paragraphs and focuses on plot and characters. *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville is an example of prose.

Drama

Drama is literature that is written in order to be performed. A work that is meant to be performed in the theater is called a play. Plays consists mainly of dialogue with some stage directions. *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare is an example of a play.

1 Label the following extracts *poetry, prose, or drama.*

a

Act 1, Scene 1

Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, with swords and bucklers, of the house of Capulet.

SAMPSON: Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

GREGORY: No, for then we should be colliers.

b

CHAPTER 1

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

c

The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

Literary elements

Poetry

A **foot** is a group of stressed and unstressed syllables that a line of poetry can be divided into.

- **iamb** – one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed one (gives a natural sound to the poem): relax, unfair, To be ...
- **spondee** – two stressed syllables (often used for emphasis): well-loved, blood boil, There goes ...
- **trochee** – one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed one (gives a sing-song

rhythm to the poem): hoping, darkness, Go now ...

- **anapest** – two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed one (often used in longer poems): incomplete, misinformed, On the way ...
- **dactyl** – one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed ones (often used in classical Greek or Latin texts to create a pulse in a poem): marmalade, criminal, Under the ...

2 What kind of foot is circled in each line of poetry? Write *iamb*, *spondee*, *trochee*, *anapest*, or *dactyl*.

1

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail
(*Ulysses* by Alfred Lord Tennyson)

2

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
(*Twas the Night Before Christmas* by Clement Clarke Moore)

3

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them
(*The Charge of the Light Brigade* by Alfred Lord Tennyson)

4

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
(*Sonnet 18* by William Shakespeare)

5

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
(*The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe)

Figurative language

- **simile** – a comparison of two things, often using the words *like* or *as*: *Oliver ran like the wind.*
- **metaphor** – a strong comparison made by stating one thing *is* another, without using *like* or *as*: *The city is a jungle.*
- **personification** – giving human characteristics to objects and phenomena: *Lightning attacked the ground from an angry sky.*
- **onomatopoeia** – the use of words that imitate the sounds they describe: *The bees buzzed from flower to flower and the birds chirped in the trees.*
- **hyperbole** – exaggeration in order to draw attention to something, or for humorous effect: *These books weigh a ton!*
- **irony** – where the true meaning behind a statement is intentionally quite the opposite of its literal meaning: *"Lovely weather," said Kate, looking out of the window at the pouring rain.*
- **alliteration** – the repetition of the same sounds at the beginning of words or in a stressed syllable: *The soldier stood silent and still.*
- **assonance** – the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words: *The hunter stopped, cocked his gun, and shot.*
- **pun** – the humorous or rhetorical effect achieved due to the resemblance in sound between two words: *Broken pencils are pointless.*
- **oxymoron** – a phrase which contains words that seem to contradict one another: *It's an open secret that their marriage is in trouble.*
- **imagery** – the use of description to draw the reader into the story. Imagery can be visual (pertaining to sight): *bright sunshine*; **auditory** (pertaining to sound): *a booming voice*; **olfactory** (pertaining to smell): *acrid smoke*; **gustatory** (pertaining to taste): *sweet grapes*; **tactile** (pertaining to touch): *soft skin*; **kinesthetic** (pertaining to movement): *the bobbing boats*; or **organic/subjective** (pertaining to internal bodily sensations, including hunger, thirst, and fatigue): *an exhausted sigh.*

3 Choose which type of figurative language is being used each time.

1 simile/metaphor

- a *All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
(As You Like It by William Shakespeare)*
- b *Curley was flopping like a fish on a line
(Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck)*

2 personification/onomatopoeia

- a *The earth hath swallowed all my hopes.
(Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare)*
- b *... then he heard the clack on stone and the leaping, dropping
clicks of a small rock falling.
(For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway)*

3 hyperbole/irony

- a *I was quaking from head to foot, and could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far.*
(*Old Times on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain)
- b *He looked about as pleasant and relaxed as a coiled rattlesnake.*
(*Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut)

4 alliteration/assonance

- a *The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.*
(*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge)
- b *Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.*
(*Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night* by Dylan Thomas)

5 pun/oxymoron

- a *Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes
With nimble soles: I have a soul of lead
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.*
(*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)
- b *Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!*
(*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)

6 visual/auditory/olfactory/gustatory/tactile/kinesthetic/organic

- a *Tossing their heads in sprightly dance*
(*Daffodils* by William Wordsworth) **imagery**
- b *So love will take between the hands a face ...*
(*The Moon Compasses* by Robert Frost) **imagery**
- c *... the yellow brick building, with its tall smokestack ...*
(*My Father on the Verge of Disgrace* by John Updike) **imagery**
- d *In the daytime ... these motors made a petulant, irritable sound ...*
(*Once More to the Lake* by E.B. White) **imagery**
- e *The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses ...*
(*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde) **imagery**
- f *I was ready to perish for thirst but so weak I had not strength ...*
(*Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe) **imagery**
- g *Mr Leopold Bloom ... liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards,
a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs,
fried hencods' roes.*
(*Ulysses* by James Joyce) **imagery**

Setting & plot

- The **setting** is the time and place in which the story takes place. For example, the novel *Gone With the Wind* takes place in and around Atlanta, Georgia, during and after the American Civil War.
- The **plot** is what happens in a story. For example, a fisherman's fight with a giant

fish is the plot of Ernest Hemingway's allegorical novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. There are many different plots, but they usually follow the same pattern. This is called the **story arc**, and it is depicted in the diagram below.

- 5 Match the story arc elements a-e with definitions 1-5.



- 1 the turning point of the story, where events come to a head
- 2 the events that follow and result from the climax
- 3 a series of events that build up tension, leading to the climax
- 4 the end of the story, where the conflict is resolved
- 5 the introduction of the story, giving background on setting, characters, and conflict

Characters

- **protagonist** – the main character in a story
- **antagonist** – the character in conflict with the protagonist
- **major characters** – the important people in a story, complex characters that grow, change, and react
- **foil characters** – characters with opposite traits to a main character, appearing to give emphasis to the main character's traits
- **minor characters** – the flat or one-sided characters in a story, who remain undeveloped

- 6 Read the summary of a novel and use the people in bold to complete the table.

Moby Dick tells the story of **Captain Ahab** and his pursuit of his enemy, a white whale called **Moby Dick**. Moby Dick bit Ahab's leg off on a previous voyage, and Ahab has sworn revenge. The story is told by a young man called **Ishmael**, who has never been on a whaling voyage before. Ishmael, his friend **Queequeg**, and all the other members of the crew are infected by Ahab's bloodlust, with the exception of the chief mate, **Starbuck**, who sees whaling as a way to make a living, and nothing else. His down-to-earth thinking, however, is no match for Ahab's monomania.

protagonist	antagonist	major character	foil character	minor character

Literary techniques

- **foreshadowing** – the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in a story. It is used to create suspense and a sense of the inevitable. A good example of foreshadowing is in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, where Candy's ancient dog is shot in the back of the head to prevent its suffering. This foreshadows both the manner of and reason for Lennie's death at the hands of his best friend George.
- **flashback/flashforward** – a narrative passage that takes the reader backwards/forwards in time. Here is an example of a flashforward: *Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. (One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez)*
- **motif** – a recognizable feature within a book or a genre. A key quality of a motif is that it is repeated. The wicked stepmother and sets of three are common motifs in fairy tales.
- **symbolism** – using an object or something else to stand for an idea. This may be a stock symbol such as the dove as a symbol of peace, or it may be something that appears in a story and gains its own significance. For instance, in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the boys use the sound of the conch shell to call meetings. The conch shell comes to symbolize community, and when it is broken, the reader understands that society has completely broken down on the island.
- **allusion** – referencing another literary text or source. For example, when James Joyce named one of the main characters in *Ulysses* Stephen Dedalus, it was an allusion to Daedalus, designer of the Labyrinth and father of Icarus in ancient Greek mythology.
- **situational irony** – when the result of a situation is at odds with the audience's or reader's expectation. A good example is the O. Henry story *The Gift of the Magi*, which depicts a young husband and wife who are very much in love but so poor that they can't afford to buy each other Christmas presents. The woman cuts off her beautiful long hair to sell it to a wig-maker, and uses the money to buy her husband a chain for his pocket watch. On Christmas Day she discovers her husband has sold his watch to buy her combs for her hair.
- **dramatic irony** – when the audience knows more than a character in a story. The character's words and actions have an extra significance that the character is ignorant of. For example, in the final act of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo finds Juliet in her family tomb and kills himself, believing her to be dead. The audience, however, knows she is not dead, and has simply taken a drug that makes it appear that she is, in order to avoid marrying Paris.
- **mirroring** – parallels in characters, events, and so on that force the reader to compare them. Mirroring can also be achieved through opposites. For example, the two main locations in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* use this technique; *Wuthering Heights* is a dark forbidding house high in the wild moors, whereas Thrushcross Grange is a bright, spacious mansion set in beautiful grounds in the green valley.
- **conflict** – the disagreement, discord, or contradiction that creates the need for change in a story. Conflict can be internal (within the protagonist) or external (between the protagonist and some other character or entity).
 - man versus self (internal)** – the struggle between the protagonist and their conscience as, for example, in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.
 - man versus nature (external)** – the struggle between the character and some element of nature, such as Captain Ahab's struggle with the whale in *Moby Dick*.
 - man versus man (external)** – the struggle between two characters in a story, for instance, the fight for leadership between Jack and Ralph in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.
 - man versus society (external)** – the struggle between a character and the rules or laws that govern the society where they live; *1984* by George Orwell is a classic case of this type of conflict.

Poetry
(1609-1842)



1

Sonnet 18

Objectives

By the end of this unit, you will:

- know about the author and the background information behind the poem
- thoroughly understand the poem
- be able to identify figurative language in the poem
- be able to summarize the poem
- be able to put the poem into modern English
- be able to analyze the characters, symbols, meter, and themes of the poem
- know and be able to describe the structure of a Shakespearean sonnet
- be able to use the poem to support your opinions and write a literature essay



Learn About ... William Shakespeare



William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English playwright and poet. He is most famous for his plays, but his sonnets are equally important. These short poems are usually love poems addressed to a particular person. Shakespeare wrote at least 154 sonnets. He wrote them when he was already very famous for his plays. Experts place the sonnets into three groups, each addressed to a different person. There are many guesses as to the identity of the three different subjects of the sonnets. Some people think that they know exactly who Shakespeare was writing to. Others, however, don't think that he was writing to any real people at all. The debate will

probably not end any time soon, but it doesn't really matter. People can enjoy these poems regardless of who they were written for.

Predict

Step 1

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Why is love a popular subject in poetry?
- 2 Do you think that writing a poem is a good way to tell a person that you love him or her?
Why or why not?

Step 2

Look at the key words from *Sonnet 18*. With a partner, discuss the meaning of the words. Based on the words, predict the main ideas in the poem.





Background information

1 Read the text and answer the questions.

- 1 When was the sonnet published?
- 2 What type of poem is it?
- 3 What is the poem about?
- 4 When and where does it take place?

Sonnet 18, or Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?

as it is sometimes called, is one of Shakespeare's most famous sonnets. It was first published in 1609 and, like many sonnets, is a love poem. The speaker begins by considering the idea of comparing his beloved to a summer day. However, he soon thinks of many different reasons why this comparison is not ideal. Instead, he realizes that his beloved will live forever in the lines of the poem. The time and place of the poem are not identified and are unimportant to the meaning of the poem.

Listen & Read

- 2  Listen to and read *Sonnet 18*. First, read for general understanding. Then, reread the poem. As you read the second time, ask yourself: what imagery does Shakespeare use in the sonnet, and why?

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.



Respond

3 Respond to the poem by answering these questions with a partner.

- 1 Was your prediction about the main ideas of the poem correct? Explain.
- 2 How did the author communicate the main ideas? Pick one (or more) and explain.
 - a with images
 - b with dialogue
 - c by presenting them directly
- 3 Which of the words in the phrase bank do you think best describe how the speaker feels in the poem? Explain.



Understand

4 Read the questions and choose the correct answers.

- 1 What does the speaker say about a summer day?
 - a It is not as lovely as his beloved.
 - b It is normally very hot.
 - c It is calm and temperate.
 - d It is usually windy.
- 2 Beautiful things become less beautiful because of chance and
 - a death
 - b nature
 - c fate
 - d time
- 3 What will allow the beloved to live forever?
 - a the summer day
 - b the poem
 - c the beloved's beauty
 - d the speaker's feelings
- 4 What does "this" refer to in the last line of the poem?
 - a the beloved's beauty
 - b the summer
 - c nature
 - d the poem itself

Figurative Language

5 Work with a partner. Find two examples of personification and one example of a pun in the poem.



Summarize

6 First, fill in the graphic organizer based on the poem you read.

Character(s)	Main Idea(s)

7 Now, use your graphic organizer to summarize the poem with a partner.

Listen

8  Listen to a tutorial about *Sonnet 18*. Then, answer the questions.

- 1 What is the tutorial mostly about?
 - a a comparison of two symbols
 - b an analysis of a symbol
 - c reasons why authors use symbols
 - d ways that symbols change
- 2 What makes the sun imperfect?
 - a It is always too hot.
 - b It is not usually bright enough.
 - c It is only fully lovely in summer.
 - d It is always covered in clouds.
- 3 What does the sun symbolize in the poem?
 - a true love
 - b lost childhood
 - c past summers
 - d natural beauty
- 4 What does NOT symbolize the imperfection of natural beauty in the poem?
 - a the poem itself
 - b flowers
 - c a summer's day
 - d the season of summer



Translate

- 9 Shakespeare wrote *Sonnet 18* sometime after 1600. The language that he used is very different from the English that people use today. Look at the example below. Use it as a guide to translate the rest of the poem into modern English with a partner.

Original	Modern
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	<i>Can I compare you to a summer day?</i>
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	<i>You are much lovelier than a summer day.</i>
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:	
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;	
But thy eternal summer shall not fade	
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;	
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:	
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,	
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.	

About the Title

- 10 Shakespeare did not give his sonnets formal titles – at least not that we know of. Instead, we use numbers to refer to the sonnets (informally, many people also use the first line of the sonnet). The numbers show the order in which the sonnets were originally published. This order may or may not be arbitrary. It's uncertain whether or not Shakespeare was actually involved in the publication of the sonnets. Many believe that someone published them without his permission. As such, the title of *Sonnet 18* does not carry much – if any – special significance.

What title would you give the poem? Why? Discuss your answer with a partner.



Analyze the Characters

11 Fill It In.

First, listen to the tutorial. Then, use words from the phrase bank to complete the graphic organizer.

Phrase Bank

- lovely
- a writer
- loves someone
- young
- temperate
- high self-esteem

The Speaker	The Beloved

12 Think About It.

Use the graphic organizer to answer the following questions.

- What do you know about the speaker?
- What do you know about the beloved?
- Which character do you know more about, the speaker or the beloved?

13 Talk It Over.

With a partner, discuss your answers to the previous questions. Then, discuss the following questions together.

- This poem is supposed to be about the speaker's beloved. Why do you think that the speaker doesn't spend more time describing the person that he loves?
- Who is the main character of the poem, the speaker or the beloved?
- If you were the beloved, how would you feel about reading this poem?

Analyze the Symbols

14 Match It.

A symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, a rose can symbolize love. Match the symbols from the poem to their meanings.

Symbols	Meanings
1 <input type="checkbox"/> summer	A beauty
2 <input type="checkbox"/> darling buds of May	B chance or fate
3 <input type="checkbox"/> unpredictable weather	C youth

15 Think About It.

With a partner, discuss your answers to the previous step. Why did you choose those answers?



16 Talk It Over.

In groups of four, talk about which symbol you think is most important to the poem and why. Agree on a symbol in your group and choose one group member to report to the rest of the class.

Analyze the Meter

17 Mark It Up.

 Reread the poem. Underline the syllables that are emphasized. Then listen to the poem again to check your work. The first line is given here as an example.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Iambic pentameter is a special kind of rhythm, or meter. An iamb is a pattern of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The prefix penta- means five. So lines of iambic pentameter have five iambs – five sets of one unstressed and one stressed syllable. Most Shakespearean sonnets use this rhythm.

18 Think About It.

Answer the following questions with a partner.

- Is every unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one?
- How many syllables are in each line?
- Does the poem follow the rules of iambic pentameter strictly?

19 Talk It Over.

As a class, discuss the importance of meter in a poem. Why did Shakespeare choose iambic pentameter for most of his sonnets?

Analyze the Themes

20 Fill It In.

The most obvious theme in *Sonnet 18* is the speaker's love for the beloved. Another important theme, however, is immortality (eternal life) and how to achieve that. Fill in the graphic organizer with lines from the poem that relate to the two different themes.

Theme	Lines from Poem
love	
immortality	

21 Think About It.

Which theme do you think is most important to the poem and why?

22 Talk It Over.

With a partner, discuss your answer to the previous question.

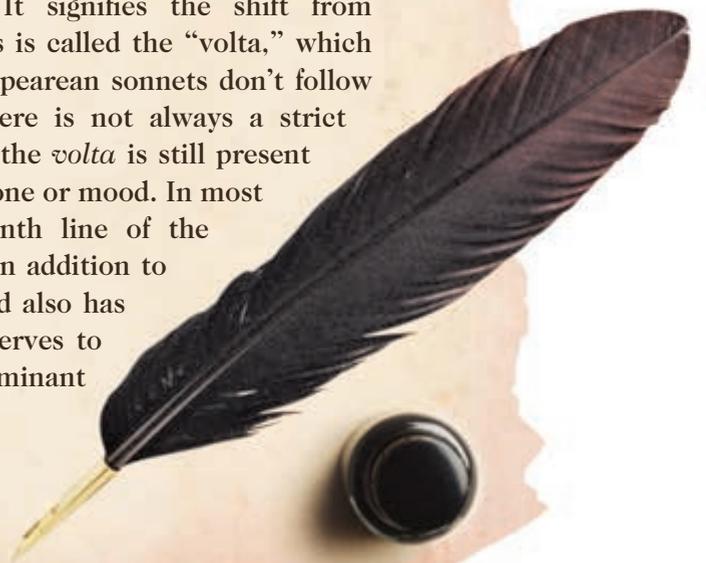


In-Depth Analysis: Sonnets

A sonnet is a specific kind of poem. It follows a particular rhyme scheme and has a set number of lines. Sonnets originated in Italy in the thirteenth century. They became very popular and eventually spread to other countries, including England. In England, the form of the sonnet changed slightly, and it is in this tradition that Shakespeare wrote his famous sonnets.

English sonnets (sometimes called Shakespearean sonnets) are structured in very particular ways. For one thing, they all have fourteen lines. These lines are broken into four groups: three quatrains and one couplet at the end. A quatrain is a group of four lines; a couplet is a group of two lines. The quatrains have an alternating rhyme scheme. That is, the first quatrain's rhyme scheme is ABAB, the second's is CDCD, and the third's EFEF. The couplet comes at the very end of the sonnet. In Shakespearean sonnets, the couplet's rhyme scheme is GG. In sum, the sonnet's structure is: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

A sonnet is more than just its form, however. The content of a sonnet is equally as important. Many sonnets are love poems. Traditionally, the first half of a sonnet presents a problem, or a question. The second half presents an answer or resolution. One line in the poem (usually the ninth) functions as the turning point in the poem. It signifies the shift from "problem" to "resolution." This is called the "volta," which means "turn" in Italian. Shakespearean sonnets don't follow this exact pattern. That is, there is not always a strict problem or question. However, the *volta* is still present and it does represent a shift in tone or mood. In most Shakespearean sonnets, the ninth line of the poem usually marks the *volta*. In addition to the *volta*, the couplet at the end also has special significance. It usually serves to sum up the main idea or dominant feeling of the poem.





23 Read the In-Depth Analysis and answer the following questions individually.

- Based on the In-Depth Analysis, what do you expect the rhyme scheme of *Sonnet 18* will be?
- Reread the poem. Mark the rhyme scheme. For each new rhyme, use a new letter. When a rhyme repeats, repeat that letter. The first quatrain is given below as an example.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? A
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:* B
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, A
And summer's lease hath all too short a date: B

* In Shakespeare's time, the word "temperate" would have been pronounced [ˈtɛmpərəˌeɪt], making it rhyme with the word "date." Today, however, we pronounce the word [ˈtɛmpɪtɪt].

- How closely does *Sonnet 18* maintain the rhyme scheme of a typical sonnet? Can you identify the quatrains and the couplet?

24 Reread the poem with a partner. Pay close attention to line 9. Then, with a partner, answer the following questions.

- What is the poem about BEFORE line 9?
- What does the speaker say in line 9?
- What is the poem about AFTER line 9?
- What is the shift or change that you see in this line?

25 Now, focus on the last two lines of the poem, the couplet. Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- What does the couplet mean?
- How does the message of the couplet relate to the poem as a whole?

Write

26 In *Sonnet 18*, the speaker tells his beloved that the poem will allow the beloved to live forever. This theme of immortality is one of the most important in the poem. In a 250- to 300-word essay, explain how the speaker communicates the theme of immortality. Include lines from the poem and explain their significance to the theme of immortality and the idea that beauty will live forever in the poem.



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