

When You Are Old

...brood over your past



CONNECT Think of an old person you know and say what you like about her/him.

REFLECT Think of five reasons why you may like to grow old and five reasons why you may not like to grow old. Share your reasons with your partner.

IMAGINE You are old and brooding over your past. What would you miss about your childhood and youth? Draw a table and mention five things each in the columns titled 'childhood' and 'youth'.

BEFORE YOU READ



WB Yeats (1865–1939) was an Irish poet. Yeats started writing poetry when he was seventeen and was heavily influenced by poets like PB Shelly and Edmund Spencer. *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* was Yeats' first collection of poems. Published in 1889, it instantly won him the reputation of a significant poet. His other major works are *In the Seven Woods* (1903), *Responsibilities and Other Poems* (1916) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933).

When You Are Old is a comic adaptation of a poem, of the same name, by Yeats. The poem was first published in *The Rose* in 1893. In 1889, when Yeats published his first collection of poems, he also met a 23-year-old English heiress and Irish revolutionary, Maud Gonne, with whom the young poet instantly fell in love. Yeats' love for her is immortalised in many of his poems, including the one you are going to read now.





READ

WHEN YOU ARE OLD AND GREY
AND FULL OF SLEEP,



AND NODDING
BY THE FIRE,
TAKE DOWN
THIS BOOK,



AND
SLOWLY
READ,

AND
DREAM
OF THE
SOFT
LOOK




YOUR EYES
HAD ONCE,



AND OF
THEIR
SHADOWS
DEEP.





AND FACED UPON
THE MOUNTAINS
OVERHEAD



AND HID
HIS FACE

pilgrim: a person who travels to
a holy place for spiritual
reasons

AMID A
CROWD
OF STARS.

CONSOLIDATE

A1. Answer these questions.

1. Who is the poet addressing his poem to? Describe the person.
2. How can we say that the person being addressed had many admirers? Did everyone love the person truly?
3. Explain the phrase, 'your changing face'.
4. Comment on the relevance of the title of the poem. Suggest an alternate title.
5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem, *When You Are Old*?



Read and Answer

A2. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

1. *How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face...*
 - a. How can we say that the person being addressed was once beautiful?
 - b. Who was the 'one man' the poet is talking about?
 - c. Explain the phrase, 'the pilgrim soul in you'.
2. *And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.*
 - a. Why would the person being addressed 'murmur, a little sadly'?
 - b. Name the figure of speech used in the above lines. Quote the lines.
 - c. How can we say that the love was lost forever?

A3. Think and answer.

1. Think of all the images that came to your mind while reading the poem, *When You Are Old*. Write a note on the imagery used in the poem.
2. What is the mood of the poem? What emotions did you have while reading the poem?



A4. Learn Interesting Terms

critical appreciation

A **critical appreciation** of a poem is a complete analysis of the poem. It provides an insight into the poetic elements like diction, imagery, structure, rhyme, rhythm, figures of speech and theme(s) used in the poem.

Write a critical appreciation of the poem, *When You Are Old*.

CREATE

B. Read these lines.

- Murrur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

In the above lines, love has been personified.

The attribution of human characteristics to something non-human is called **personification**.

Identify the objects or ideas that are being personified and explain the human traits or actions that are applied to these objects or ideas.

1. The wind whispered through the dark and dismal bungalow.
2. The gardener lovingly watered his plants believing he was making his flowers happy.
3. As we walked through the scorching desert, the sun sucked in our energy.
4. Time crawled as Ranbir sat, in the gloomy detention room, painfully hearing the clock ticking.
5. When Mansi walked through the store, each pair of jeans called out to her.

C1. We have already learnt about these types of verbs.

- transitive and intransitive
- finite and non-finite

Let's revise them quickly.



Word World



Language Ladder