

Note: The transactional processes suggested in CISCE curriculum are highlighted in grey.

Learning Outcomes

- To recognise that power and riches come to an end but the character and personality traits of an individual live on
- To classify the poem as a sonnet
- To predict and use interpreting techniques to understand the poem

Summary: The poet met a traveller who speaks of the broken remains of a gigantic statue of King Ozymandias. This King ordered a statue of himself to be built. The writing on the pedestal reveals the pompous and boastful nature of the King. The traveller speaks of how this once prominent monument now lies shattered and isolated in an empty desert, seen by no one and long forgotten. The traveller realises that even the most powerful and proud are mocked by time, as the gigantic statue of Ozymandias that he had commissioned of himself, has been reduced to two legs, a shattered face, and a pedestal. Once a mighty King is now reduced to a wreck in the desert, forgotten by all.

Pre-reading

Write the title on the board.

Ask students:

What do you think the poem is about?

Ask students:

Why are statues constructed? What are some statues that you have in your city/country? Why were they constructed? What do you think

of people who order the construction of their own statues? Why do people build statues of themselves? List out the qualities of these people. Do you think such people will be remembered over the generations? Why / Why not? Name some people who are remembered long after their death? (Dr. Abdul Kalaam, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa) What are they remembered for?

READING

Students read to comprehend, predict, and analyse

Note: Ozymandias is an ancient Greek name for King Ramses II of Egypt. Ozy - mandias – pronounced as oz-ee-mand-yes. 'Ozy' comes from the Greek "ozium" which means either, 'to breathe' or 'air'; 'mandias' comes from the Greek "mandate" which means 'to rule'.

Play the audio track and pause to explain the poem in parts. / Let students read the poem. / Read the poem aloud.

Explain the poem as students/you read.

Now divide the class into groups and tell them to read the poem and discuss the content.

Content

Let students discuss and answer the questions in groups.

What do you now think the poem is about? What is the setting of this poem? Now that you understand the meaning of the title, how does the king's name relate to the content of the poem? Where did the traveller come from?

Who is the narrator of the poem? Whom did he meet? What is the expression on the face of the statue? What do the 'frown' and the 'wrinkled lip' suggest about the nature of the king? 'The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.' Whose hand and heart does the poet refer to? (Hand of the sculptor, heart of the king) What does the poem tell us about the sculptor? What did Ozymandias mean by 'look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!?' Who has to despair? Why? (Other kings, because he thought that he was greater than anyone else) The traveller describes 'the decay / Of that colossal wreck'— What has happened to the king's power? Who are the characters in the poem? Who is the most powerful character? How do you know that? In what ways is each of the characters powerful? What is your impression of Ozymandias as a king? What message does the poem convey?

Language

List the fascinating words in the poem or emotions conveyed through the poem.

- Lifeless objects: (trunkless legs of stone, pedestal ...)
- Emotion: (Passion, pride)
- Expressions: (sneer, frown, mock)

- Qualities and Character: (not much mention. There is more mention of what he thought of himself than what others thought of him)
- Power: (Mighty)
- Destruction and emptiness: (Shattered, wreck, bare)
- Find some examples of adjectives, verbs and adverbs and try to explain the reason for the poet using them.

Atmosphere

What kind of mood (atmosphere) and tone does the last stanza convey? (Mockery)

Poetic devices / Literary devices

Alliteration: ..., and sneer of cold command

Personification: Hand that mocked them

Imagery: vast desert, ruined statue alone, shattered

Theme: Everything passes away with time

Irony: The statue of a king, in ruins, prides itself on its greatness.

Post-reading

Recite the poem with the correct expressions, intonations, voice and tone modulations.

STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

Ozymandias

Comprehension

- A.**
1. a traveller who had been to a very old land
 2. the lower part of two huge legs, and the broken head lying nearby
 3. a frown, wrinkled lips and a cold and proud expression
 4. 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
 5. endless stretches of sand and nothing else
- B.**
1. a. The speaker is the traveller who had seen the statue of Ozymandias.
b. 'Them' refers to the two huge and trunkless legs of stone that stand in the desert.
c. The 'shattered visage' belonged to the statue of Ozymandias. It might have shattered when it fell down and also because of the effects of weather, over time.
 2. a. The emotions and passions of king Ozymandias, expressed in the face of the statue.
b. The 'lifeless things' refer to the remaining parts of the broken statue—the frown, the wrinkled lip and the look of cold command on the face of the statue.
c. A sculptor had stamped or depicted them on the statue.

3. a. These are Ozymandias' words.
 - b. By these words, Ozymandias had meant to show off his achievements—all that he had done and built perhaps. He challenged other powerful people like kings to look at what he had done and feel disappointed that they could never achieve as much as he had. These words convey an attitude of great pride and satisfaction.
- C.**
- a. Yes, Ozymandias must have been powerful and important at one time, as he had such a huge statue made of himself and could boast of his achievements. However, he did not remain powerful and important forever. When the traveller reached that place, all that had remained of Ozymandias was some broken parts of the statue and nothing else.
 - b. Yes, Nature and Time caused the change. With time, Ozymandias not only died, but everything he had done and built and achieved also changed and disappeared and gave way to other things. Nothing remains forever. Nature then broke down even the huge statue that had managed to survive after years. Perhaps, after some more time, even those pieces would not be visible. This shows that Nature and Time are more powerful than Ozymandias, or than any human being, no matter how important they think themselves to be.

Appreciating the Poem

1. The four human characters in the poem are the speaker of the poem ('I met...'), the traveller who told him the story of Ozymandias, Ozymandias the king and the sculptor who made Ozymandias' statue. Of these, Ozymandias and the sculptor belong to the past and the traveller and the speaker of the poem belong to the present.
2. *Suggested answers (accept any logical answer):* 'boundless and bare', 'lone and level', 'sands stretch'
3. Ozymandias had been a proud and arrogant king who ordered a colossal statue of himself and on its pedestal wrote those boastful lines. He wanted everyone to look on his achievements and feel jealous. However, in the poem, immediately after the lines on the pedestal come these words: 'Nothing beside remains.' This means that in spite of Ozymandias' ambition and boast, none of his works or achievements had survived. So, the lines on the statue did not hold true when the traveller saw the statue because there was no work left to look at. This is a good example of irony because of the difference between what Ozymandias had thought or expected (he would be powerful, important, admired and envied forever), and what actually happened (nothing remained of him and his works except a few broken parts of a statue in a desert).

Vocabulary

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. a. land | b. <i>Sample answer:</i> furniture |
| 2. a. visage/face of the statue | b. <i>Sample answer:</i> mirror |
| 3. a. command | b. <i>Sample answer:</i> manner |
| 4. a. the wrecked statue | b. <i>Sample answer:</i> palace |
| 5. a. the desert sands | b. <i>Sample answer:</i> ocean |

Going Further

Free response

QUESTION BANK

Ozymandias

A. Answer in brief.

How did the sculptor depict the expression on the king's face? (Ozymandias)

Ans: The sculptor had carved a sneer on the face of the king. The frown and wrinkled lip carved on the face tell us that he was an arrogant king and proud of what he was.

B. Answer in detail.

Summarise the poem *Ozymandias*.

Ans: The speaker happens to meet a traveller from a foreign land who talks about a crumbling statue of a king. Only the legs of the statue were standing, while the face lay half sunken in the sand. The sculptor captured the arrogance of the king when he sculpted his face which appeared to be sneering and frowning. This went well with the inscription on the pedestal that boasted his greatness. This is in stark contrast to its present state where the statue is in ruins. The decaying statue and the desert land convey a silent message of human vanity. Neither the sculptor who immortalised the king with his craft nor the great Pharaoh and his works have stood the test of time.

C. Choose the correct answer.

What is the main theme of the poem, 'Ozymandias'?

- It is about a powerful king, Ozymandias.
- It is about how powerless time and decay make everyone.
- It is about the destruction of a great king.

Ans: b

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things

- What did the sculptor stamp on the sculpture?
- What survived and what did not?

Ans: a. The sculptor captured the king's pride and arrogance.

b. The countenance displaying pride and arrogance was still visible on the face. What did not exist anymore were his achievements that had crumbled to dust with time.

E. Answer in detail. (Think and Answer)

Explain the point of view in the poem *Ozymandias*.

Ans: The point of view is that of the persona who talks about the distant past. He relates what he hears from a traveller about the ancient ruins of a Pharaoh of Egypt. The inscription is an ironical comment on the pride of the king. The image of the wreck among the sands is the poet's comment on the pointlessness of pride in human achievement that will be forgotten with the passing of time.