

Teaching notes

The following resource can be found in Teachit's KS3 'Poetry through the ages' 6 week teaching pack. In this context, the lesson can be found in 'Week two: 16th Century - Shakespeare and the Elizabethans'. However, you could use this resource on a 'stand-alone' basis, perhaps as a way of getting students comfortable with approaching an unseen text.

Context

When preparing students to study 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage', you might, of course, want to provide a bit of context (or ask students to do some research) on Elizabethan England and the reign of the Tudor Monarchs.

Pre-reading

A useful stepping stone towards analysis is to present students with a 'deconstructed' version of the text so that they can immediately see what sort of language is being used without feeling any pressure to 'interpret' the poem. Use the 'Sorting 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage' activity to provide students with a 'soft' introduction to the first two stanzas of the poem and help them to identify key themes before they see the poem in its entirety.

Reading the poem

Given that the poem's content and language is challenging, you might like to treat students to a recording of it or read it aloud to them before they embark on the group work challenge below. YouTube, as ever, will provide you with plenty of options and choices on this score! (Richard Burton, for example, provides a [sombre \(but pleasant\) reading](#) of the poem.) At this point, you could get students to jot down key words or things that strike them at first 'listening'.

Group work

In terms of tackling the poem, you might find that students get more from it by accessing it in groups of four or five as opposed to attempting to answer the questions individually.

To do this, you'll need to divide the poem up into sections. The obvious subdivision would be to carve it up into stanzas, with your less able students tackling stanza 1 and your most able students tackling stanza 4.

Extension tasks

Depending on your group, either set students to a) provide a written analysis of the poem or b) go for something more creative (and enjoyable!) and come up with a visual response to or interpretation of the poem.

Sorting 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage'

The words below have been taken from the first part of Sir Walter Raleigh's poem 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage'. Three categories have been suggested for you (though you'll need to put some more words into the religious category in order to complete it). Create as many other categories as you need to sort these words into groups.

Religious	Travelling	Senses
bliss balmer ...		

a, a-dry, after, and, apparelled, at, balm, balmer, be, before, blestful, bliss, blood, body's, bottle, bowl, buckets, but, by, cast, clay, clear, crystal, day, diet, drawn, drink dwells, everlasting, every, faith, fill, first, fountains, fresh, gage, give, given, glory, gown, happy, have, heaven, hill, hope's, I, I'll, immortal, in, it, joy, kiss, land, like, like me, me, milken, mine, more, more, mountains, must, my, nectar, no, of, off, other, over, palmer, peaceful, pilgrimage, pilgrims, quench, quiet, rags, saints salvation, scallop-shell, scrip, see, shall, silver, soul, spring, staff, suckets, sweetness, take, take, taste, that, the, their, them, then, there, thirst, those, thus, to, towards, travelleth, true, up, upon, walk, wells, where, whilst, will

Sort the words into different groups:

You can label the groups as you wish, e.g. religious or movement words.

You can put a word into more than one category.

Brief background information

Sir Walter Raleigh (1522-1618)

Before his execution for treason, Sir Walter Raleigh won fame as an explorer and adventurer. He was also a scholar and a gifted lyric poet, and brought glory to Elizabethan England (along with the potatoes and tobacco he is said to have introduced to the country).

The following poem is said to have been written by Raleigh while he was imprisoned in The Tower of London awaiting death for treason.



Your task

Your teacher is going to divide the poem up and give each group a section of the poem to focus on. Read your group's section through aloud and make some notes on it / annotate the poem with your thoughts. You should focus on the following things:

- Content. What is your section about?
- Language. What sorts of words does Raleigh use? Are you confused about any of them? If so, which ones? If you have dictionaries, look up the meaning of difficult words, if not, guess the meanings from the way they are used in the poem.
- Poetic techniques. Does Raleigh use any recognised poetic techniques e.g. similes? If so, comment on the effect of the techniques he uses.
- Tone and mood. Do you get any impressions about how Raleigh is feeling? Jot down some words to describe his emotions.
- Rhyme and rhythm. Can you detect a rhyme scheme? If so, what is it? (e.g. ABBA etc.)

Be prepared to feed back your thoughts to the rest of the class. You'll also need to make notes on what the other groups say about their section of the poem.

The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage

GIVE me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer,
No other balm will there be given;
Whilst my soul, like a quiet palmer,
Travelleth towards the land of heaven;
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains:
There will I kiss
The bowl of bliss;
And drink mine everlasting fill
Upon every milken hill:
My soul will be a-dry before;
But after, it will thirst no more.
Then by that happy blestful day,
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see,
That have cast off their rags of clay,
And walk apparelled fresh like me.
I'll take them first
To quench their thirst,
And taste of nectar suckets,
At those clear wells
Where sweetness dwells
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.

And when our bottles and all we
Are filled with immortality,
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,
Strowed with rubies thick as gravel;
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral, and pearly bowers.
From thence to heavens's bribeless hall,
Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold,
No forged accuser bought or sold,
No cause deferred, nor vain-spent journey;
For there Christ is the King's Attorney,
Who pleads for all without degrees,
And he hath angels, but no fees.
And when the grand twelve-million jury
Of our sins, with direful fury,
'Gainst our souls black verdicts give,
Christ pleads his death, and then we live.

Be thou my speaker, taintless pleader,
Unblotted lawyer, true proceeder!
Thou giv'st salvation even for alms;
Not with a bribèd lawyer's palms.
And this is my eternal plea
To him that made heaven, earth, and sea,
That, since my flesh must die so soon,
And want a head to dine next noon,
Just at the stroke, when my veins start and
spread,
Set on my soul an everlasting head.
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit;
To tread those blest paths which before I writ.

Extension tasks

- 1) Summarise (in no more than 300 words) what you think the poem is about and how effective it is in delivering its message / ideas to the reader. You should use quotations to support your points.
- 2) Choose one line or image from the poem - ideally the one which captured your imagination the most. Come up with a visual interpretation of it. This could be something you've drawn, a collage of 'found' images or something else entirely. It's up to you!

Image credit

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