
Poetry Practice Test

Grass
by Carl Sandburg

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work –
 I am the grass; I cover all.
And pile them high at Gettysburg
5 And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
 What place is this?
 Where are we now?
10 I am the grass.
 Let me work.

NOTE – The poem lists the sites of several legendary and bloody battles, including those fought in the Napoleonic Wars (Austerlitz and Waterloo), the Civil War (Gettysburg), and World War I (Verdun and Ypres).

Directions: Answer the following questions after reading “Grass” by Carl Sandburg.

- 1. Reread line 5 of the poem. What literary device is used in this line?**
 - A. Metaphor, representing the grass as a large pile
 - B. Simile, comparing the grass to battles
 - C. Alliteration, repeating the “p” sound
 - D. Allusion, referring to the two bloody battles
- 2. What does the grass most likely represent in the poem?**
 - A. Death
 - B. Time
 - C. Grief
 - D. War
- 3. What literary device is used to create rhythm in the poem?**
 - A. Consonance, repeating the “p” sound
 - B. Repetition, saying things more than once
 - C. Allusion, mentioning the battles
 - D. Alliteration, repeating vowel sounds
- 4. Which statement best summarizes the poem?**
 - A. Visitors pile bodies high as a peace offering to the grass
 - B. The grass attracts tourists to former battlegrounds
 - C. The grass hides the violent evidence of human war
 - D. Visitors want to get away from the grass at the battlegrounds
- 5. What is the overall tone of the poem?**
 - A. Humorous, laughing at the ridiculous nature of war
 - B. Optimistic, believing that war will not happen again
 - C. Theatrical, dramatizing the pain caused by all of these battles
 - D. Calm, emphasizing the peace in these places after time
- 6. The grass as the speaker of the poem is an example of**
 - A. Allusion, by referring to the shovel used to bury people
 - B. Tone, by creating a peaceful feeling in the poem
 - C. Personification, by giving the grass human qualities
 - D. Simile, by comparing the speaker to the growing grass

7. **With which statement would the poet most likely agree?**
- A. Visiting war memorials is disrespectful to the dead
 - B. War effects people both young and old
 - C. Peace on Earth is impossible to achieve
 - D. Battlegrounds are nothing more than cemeteries
8. **Which word best describes the grass?**
- A. Tired
 - B. Furious
 - C. Detached
 - D. Grouchy
9. **In which sentence does conductor have the same meaning as in line 7?**
- A. A metal that is an excellent conductor of electricity is copper.
 - B. We waited as the conductor made his way up the aisle collecting tickets.
 - C. The park ranger is the conductor for our expedition into the forest.
 - D. The orchestra played as the conductor waved his arms enthusiastically.
10. **In which sentence does cover have the same meaning as in line 3?**
- A. Nate had enough money to cover the price of pizzas for the party.
 - B. Our insurance policy will cover any damage caused by the fire.
 - C. The boy placed his hand on his test paper to cover his answers.
 - D. His newspaper route will cover all of our neighborhood.
11. **According to the poem, what is one role of the grass?**
- A. A defender, protecting the graves of the dead
 - B. A beautifier, making battlefields look attractive
 - C. An equalizer, leveling the pain of the past with time
 - D. An investigator, knowing what has occurred in the past

The Past
by Ella Wheeler Cox

Fling my past behind me, like a robe
Worn threadbare in the seams, and out of date.
I have outgrown it. Wherefore should I weep
And dwell upon its beauty, and its dyes
5 Of Oriental splendor, or complain
That I must needs discard it? I can weave
Upon the shuttles of the future years
A fabric far more durable. Subdued,
It may be, in the blending of its hues,
10 Where somber shades commingle, yet the gleam
Of golden warp shall shoot it through and through,
While over all a fadeless luster lies,
And starred with gems made out of crystallized tears,
My new robe shall be richer than the old.

Directions: Answer the following questions after reading “The Past” by Ella Wheeler Cox.

12. **Which of the following is the best statement of the subject of “The Past”?**
- A. Replacing old clothes with new better ones
 - B. Replacing ugliness with beauty
 - C. Putting the past behind you to create a new future
 - D. Putting sadness in the past in order to be happy
13. **Which of the following phrases is a simile found in this poem?**
- A. “Fling my past behind me”
 - B. “Like a robe worn threadbare”
 - C. “A fabric more durable”
 - D. “While over all fadeless luster lies”

14. What two things are being compared in this poem?

- A. The past and a robe
- B. Threadbare and durable
- C. The past and the future
- D. An old robe and a new robe

15. In line 10 “somber shades” is an example of

- A. Assonance
- B. Onomatopoeia
- C. Metaphor
- D. Alliteration

A Slightly Different Rhyme

Author Unknown

Weekdays after work I
Often drive down to the shore
And watch the ocean’s rhythmic dance
In order to un-
5 Wind.

On windless days its placid face
Is like a sheet of glass,
And colored with the evening sun
It offers peace of
10 Mind.

Worries of the day drift off
To mingle with the clouds;
The *whoosh* of folding waves call out
Leave your thoughts be-
15 *Hind.*

This favorite spot of mine
Will never interrupt my view;
There’s room enough for you and me
To never feel con-
20 Fined.

And by the time I get back home
The world has settled down
Into a brand new harmony –
A slightly different
25 Rhyme.

Directions: Answer the following questions after reading “A Slightly Different Rhyme.”

16. In stanza 2, what does the word placid mean?

- A. Cold
- B. Wrinkled
- C. Long
- D. Calm

17. In stanza 3, what does the word mingle mean?

- A. Run
- B. Join
- C. Rain
- D. Circle

18. In stanza 1, the phrase “ocean’s rhythmic dance” is used to describe which of the following?

- A. Heat
- B. Wind
- C. Waves
- D. Colors

19. In stanza 4, what is the meaning of the word confined?

- A. Restrictive
- B. Happy
- C. Angry
- D. Heavy

20. In stanza 2, the phrase “its placid face is like a sheet of glass” is an example of

- A. Symbolism
- B. Simile
- C. Foreshadowing
- D. Slang

21. What is the theme of the poem?

- A. Evening is peaceful.
- B. Work is stressful.
- C. Nature is relaxing and restorative.
- D. The ocean has different types of motion.

22. What does the ocean represent in the poem?

- A. Responsibility
- B. The future
- C. Childhood
- D. Peace and harmony

23. Why does the poet use the word *whoosh* in stanza 3?

- A. To indicate the sound of the waves
- B. To imitate the sound of rain
- C. To indicate the color of the waves
- D. To indicate the movement of the clouds

24. In stanza 1, the phrase “Weekdays after work I often drive down to the shore” incorporates which of the following?

- A. Symbolism
- B. Metaphor
- C. Alliteration
- D. Simile

Poetry Test Review:

Your test will be comprised of the following:

- 40 multiple choice questions total
- 20 Poetry Analysis/Close Reading Questions
- 20 Literary Device Identification/Definition Questions
 - You are responsible for all the terms in the Poetic Devices Handout.
 - You will not be asked to identify the foot/meter of a line of poetry.