

2.4 Upon Westminster Bridge

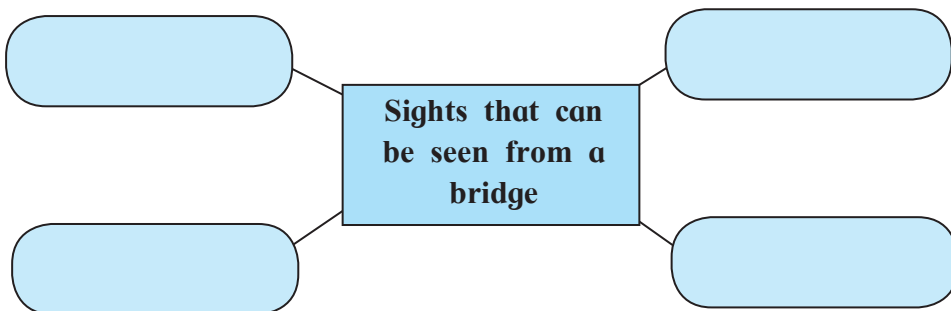
ICE BREAKERS

- (i) A bridge connects people at either sides of a river or valleys in cities or villages. Discuss with your partner the importance of a bridge to both the cities and the villages, and complete the table.

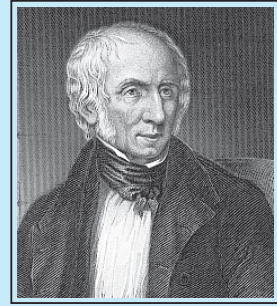
Cities	Villages

- (ii) Building a bridge needs careful planning. Think about what goes on before the actual construction begins.

- Proper planning
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- You might have visited a bridge. Complete the web describing the sights you could see from the bridge.



William Wordsworth, born on April 7, 1770, was a major English Romantic poet, who was an honoured 'Poet Laureate' of the United Kingdom in the court of Queen Victoria, from 1843 until his death on 23 April 1850. He is a leading English Nature poet. His collection of poetry 'Lyrical Ballads' is considered to be the central work of Romantic literary theory. The Poem 'Upon Westminster Bridge' is one of the best examples of his romantic poems.



'Upon Westminster Bridge' is a Petrarchan Sonnet in which William Wordsworth describes the beauty of the city as seen at dawn from the Westminster Bridge, London. The poet was enthralled by the panoramic landscape, beauty, calm and quiet nature before him. This poem was first published in the 'Collection of Poems' in two Volumes in 1807.

Upon Westminster Bridge

Earth has not anything to show more fair:

Dull would he be of soul who could pass by

A sight so touching in its majesty:

This city now **doth**, like a garment, wear

The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,

Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie

Open unto the fields, and to the sky;

All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep

In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm, so deep!

The river **glideth** at his own sweet will:

Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;

And all that **mighty heart** is lying still!

—William Wordsworth

archaic word :

doth - does

The garment is compared with.....

The morning looks beautiful because

Guess the meaning of 'glideth'.

Guess what is referred to as the 'mighty heart'.

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) For preparing questions based on the poem, an overall understanding of the poem is a must. Discuss with your partner and prepare a set of five questions.

For example:

- a. What is the name of the bridge?
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

(A2) (i) Choose the correct alternative for the given lines. Focus on the inference of the poet.

(a) 'Earth has not anything to show more fair:'

The line means-

- (1) The poet thinks that the place was not so good.
- (2) The poet thinks that there is another place which is more beautiful than this.
- (3) The poet thinks that there is no place on the earth which is as beautiful as this one.

(b) 'Dull would he be of soul who could pass by'.

The line means-

- (1) One can walk over the bridge and ignore the surrounding beauty.
- (2) One can halt at the place to enjoy the beauty.
- (3) Anyone with an appreciative mind would not be able to ignore the beauty.

(ii) 'Earth has not anything to show more fair.'

This line expresses the poet's feelings. The sight he saw from the bridge is beautiful. There are a few more lines similar to the above. With the help of your partner find them and discuss what they express.

(iii) The poem creates a delightful picture of the city, rich in its natural beauty. Work in pairs, groups and pick out the lines from the poem which give the pictorial effect to the poem. Write it in your own words.

(A3) Find out the words and phrases which describe the following. One is done for you.

sight	touching in its majesty
air	
river	
house	
morning	
sun	

(A4) Read the line :

(i) 'The city now, doth, like a garment wear'.

The poet imagines that the city is wearing a beautiful garment. Hence, the figure of speech is personification. Find out more examples of personification from the poem.

(ii) 'Dull would he be of soul who could pass by.'

This line of the poem can be rewritten as:

'He would be of dull soul.'

The figure of speech is known as 'Inversion'.

Find out one more example of Inversion from the poem.

(iii) The poem is a Petrarchan Sonnet. The poem is divided into two parts-

(a) An Octave

The first part comprising eight lines.

(b) A sestet

The second part comprising six lines.

Read the first four lines of the poem. The rhyme scheme is a b b a. Read the rhyme scheme for next four lines. It is a b b a. Now read the first three lines of the sestet and note the rhyme scheme. It is c d c. The rhyme scheme of the last three lines is d c d. This is the common design of a Petrarchan Sonnet.

This is a Petrarchan Sonnet. Complete the given table by giving examples from the poem.

Features	Examples / Lines
Objects used	
Praise/blames	
Metaphor	
Simile	
Personification	
Number of lines	
Rhyme scheme	

(iv) The pride of any city is its skyline.

Write 5 lines about the place where you live and what makes you feel proud about it.

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(A5) (i) There is a common belief that cities have always flourished only after human intrusion over nature. Write a speech expressing your opinion about it.

(ii) Compose a poem on an imaginary village. Try to maintain the rhyme scheme in the poem. You may begin like this....

Settled on the bank of a river
 Like a queen.
 Is my beautiful village
 Full of bushes green.

(iii) Write an appreciation of the sonnet. Refer to the earlier poems for the points to be covered for appreciation.

- (iv) Write a summary of the sonnet. Refer to the earlier poems for the points to be covered for writing the summary.
- (v) While building a bridge, a group of people come together. They are architects, designers, engineers, officers, masons, politicians, building material suppliers, carpenters, etc. Write about the qualifications of these people. Choose any career from the list above and complete the table.

Your choice of career/ careers	Skill/Qualifications

(A6) Project

Given below are a few famous bridges in India. Find out more information about them and write in your notebook.

- (a) The Howrah Bridge
- (b) Laxman Zhula
- (c) Pamban Bridge
- (d) Worli Sea Link
