

SYNOPSIS

Shakespeare's 154 Elizabethan sonnets appear in an obvious subject grouping and cover a variety of highly personal topics, particularly facts about the speaker's relationship with his mistress, patron, and other poets. Addressed to an unnamed love object, the poems mention a lady, dark in appearance and morals, who is the speaker's mistress. The poems also describe a male love object who becomes the speaker's rival for the affections of the dark lady. The speaker vacillates between the heights of love and passion to the depths of despair, particularly when other poets praise his beloved.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564-April 23, 1616) attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain's acting company, later known as the King's Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.

Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and public official in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shakespeare retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in gentility and was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Published by Thomas Thorpe on May 20, 1609, in London, Shakespeare's 154 sonnets appeal to both romance and mystery, especially because of the dearth of information about the dark lady, the young male subject, the rival poets, and Mr. W. H., to whom the first edition is dedicated. Shakespeare wrote the sonnets somewhere near the end of the sixteenth century. The poems express a vividness and vitality that impel the reader to delve into them for sheer pleasure. Probably intended to be circulated individually among

Shakespeare's friends, the poems were poorly edited and proofread, evidence that they were part of the poet's personal writing and as such not intended to be published in collected form.

The first critic to evaluate the sonnet sequence was Francis Meres, an Elizabethan writer who found the poems "gorgeous and delectable." The sequence from this point to the present has intrigued a string of critics and interpreters, many of whom proposed names to fill in the gaps created by Shakespeare's discreet references to dark lady, male lover, and rival poets. One of the few to provide an identifiable cast of characters, A. L. Rowse in the introduction to *The Poems of Shakespeare's Dark Lady* declares that the young man in the poems must be the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's only patron. The rival poets, who bring a note of diffidence to Shakespeare's verse, he labels as Thomas Nashe and Christopher Marlowe, both of whom courted the dark lady, Emilia Bassano Lanier, who also ensnares Southampton in her silken web.

Other matters dealing with form and style are easier to categorize. Shakespeare followed the pattern of the Elizabethan sonnet, which falls into four divisions—three quatrains rounded out with a single rhyming couplet. The rhyme scheme regularly works out to abab, cdcd, efef, gg, which counters the Renaissance Italian verse form popularized by Petrarch, i.e. abba, abba, cde, cde. The themes of the poems fall under two identifiable headings: Sonnets 1-126 discuss the poet's relationship with the Earl, a spoiled youth ten years Shakespeare's junior who was both his friend and patron. The poems encourage him to assert himself and marry and beget children, who will preserve his likeness, good qualities, and name.

The second grouping of sonnets, 127 to 154, describe the poet's torment during his romance with the dark lady. The subject matter of these verses indicates an ambivalence in the poet, who was all too aware of his beloved's shady reputation for short-term liaisons with other men. The writing of these, from 1592 to 1593, corresponds with the composition of *Love's Labours Lost*, which may feature the relationship between Shakespeare and his mistress in the roles of Rosaline and Berowne.

Overall, the sonnets follow Elizabethan conventions. They discuss such subjects as beauty, immortality, the pain of passion, the power of verse, evanescence, reputation, betrayal, personal faults, and compensation. A few are highly artificial, adhering to the standard sentiment of Renaissance sonneteers. Most, on the other hand, are uniquely Shakespearean in theme and diction. They

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demonstrate sincere emotions, yet cannot be aligned into a retelling of an autobiographical episode from the poet's life.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To experience the sonnets of Shakespeare
2. To isolate examples of the mechanics of a poem
3. To enumerate the conventions of Renaissance verse
4. To envision the ideal Elizabethan woman
5. To characterize the rhythm and rhyme scheme of a sonnet
6. To analyze varying views of love and beauty
7. To discuss the implications of the speaker's identity
8. To comment on Shakespeare's use of natural elements
9. To contrast Elizabethan love poetry with modern verse
10. To determine Shakespeare's purpose in writing so many sonnets
11. To chart the use and purpose of the sonnet throughout history

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To pinpoint the tone of Sonnet 29
2. To explain the extended metaphors in Sonnets 24, 33, and 143
3. To discuss the effectiveness of the travel motif in Sonnet 50
4. To account for the popularity of Sonnets 116 and 129
5. To explain the humor in Sonnet 135
6. To note the theme of evanescence in Sonnet 18
7. To ponder the sexual implications of Sonnet 20

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the sonnet sequence. Explain the meaning of each. Poem number, line, and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And, tender churl, makest waste in niggarding.
(Number 1, lines 11-12, p. 1)
(The poet urges the subject of his verse to marry rather than to begrudge the world his good qualities.)
2. For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds him there,

Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnowed and bareness everywhere.
(Number 5, lines 5-8, p. 5)

(Shakespeare follows a traditional poetic tack by describing the ravages of time, which o'ersnows the love object when her hair turns white.)

3. Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair
To be Death's conquest and make worms thine heir.
(Number 6, lines 13-14, p. 6)
(Here the poet uses a common image, that of the worms that devour flesh after death.)
4. But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, for duteous, now converted are
From his low tract and look another way: (Number 7, lines 9-12, p. 7)
(The poet characterizes the response of earthlings to the sun's passage. Early in his trek across the heavens, their eyes are duteous to his movements. Later, they ignore him.)
5. Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee like a makeless wife.
(Number 9, lines 3-4, p. 9)
(The poet, in his lengthy series of poems treating the theme of procreation, reminds his subject that he may accidentally die before conceiving children and leave the world feeling bereft.)
6. And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defense
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.
(Number 12, lines 13-14, p. 12)
(Shakespeare refers to the traditional view of personified time as carrying a scythe, with which he mows down his victims.)
7. But when in thee Time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should exiate. (Number 22, lines 3-4, p. 22)
(When the speaker sees wrinkles on his beloved's face, he realizes that he, too, will die soon.)
8. The painful warrior famoused for fight.
(Number 25, line 9, p. 25)
(The poet conjures up the picture of the war-weary fighter whose reputation links him with courage.)
9. So flatter I the swart-complexioned night.
(Number 28, line 11, p. 28)
(The poet sees night as a face covered by dark skin.)
10. That in thy abundance am sufficed
And by a part of all thy glory live. (Number 37, lines 11-12, p. 37)
(The speaker feels satisfied by identifying with his beloved's good qualities.)

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11. Be thou the tenth Muse. (Number 38, line 9, p. 38)
(Because his beloved gives him inspiration, she belongs among the nine Muses from Greek mythology as a tenth member of the family.)
12. When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!
(Number 43, lines 11-12, p. 43)
(By referring to his beloved's image in dreams, he sees her as an unclear shadow and implies that she is a ghost.)
13. To 'cide this title is impanelled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart. (Number 46, lines 8-9, p. 46)
(Shakespeare uses legal jargon to describe how his eye and heart serve on the jury that decides the beloved's truer form, thought or vision.)
14. . . . yet when they have devised
What strained touches rhetoric can lend.
(Number 82, lines 9-10, p. 82)
(Poets, in trying to summarize the subjects' appeal, strain the concept of effective written and spoken communication.)
15. What potions have I drunk of Siren tears. (Number 119, line 1, p. 119)
(The poet admits having fallen prey to a temptress.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the sonnets.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Cite examples of archaic or out-of-date words and phrases used in the sonnets, such as *thee*, and *thou* for *you* and *twain* for *two*. Explain the meaning of each archaic term.
 - (*leese*, p. 5, line 14—*lose*)
 - (*hap*, p. 9, line 3—*perhaps*, by chance)
 - (*makeless*, p. 9, line 4—*mateless*)
 - (*erst*, p. 12, line 6—*formerly*)
 - (*methinks*, p. 14, line 2—*it seems to me*)
 - (*fell a-doting*, p. 20, line 10—*began doting*)
 - (*rased*, p. 25, line 11—*erased*)
 - (*dost him grace*, p. 28, line 10—*graces him*)
 - (*vouchsafe*, p. 32, line 9—*promise*)
 - (*physic*, p. 34, line 9—*medicine, treatment*)
 - (*durst*, p. 68, line 4—*dares*)
2. Cite examples of poetic devices used in the sonnets. Identify each.

- (1. Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchers, were shorn away
To live a second life on second head
[conceit])
2. Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
some in their garments [repetition, parallel construction]
3. Full many a glorious morning have I seen ...
(Sonnet 33) [extended metaphor]
4. As an unperfect actor on the stage [simile]
5. Love's not Time's fool [personification]
6. Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not
[caesura]
7. Describe Adonis [mythological allusion]
8. Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws
[apostrophe]
9. What potions have I drunk of Siren tears
[metaphor]
10. Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will
[pun]
11. Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one
[alliteration]
12. savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust
[cacophony]
13. All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
[euphony]
14. How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow
[inversion]
15. Love's fire heats water; water cools not love
[irony]

3. Meter a few lines from the sonnets that demonstrate how Shakespeare varies the standard iambic pentameter. Explain the reason for the variance.
(Shakespeare, who stabilized the language of both his plays and poems with iambic pentameter, emphasized the five-beat line, which is the basis of English speech. This line reads '- ' - ' - ' - ' - '. However, Shakespeare did not allow the rhythm of the standard line to dictate to every phrase. Where he needed to, he added extra beats and inverted feet for variance and stress and to enhance the natural flow of language. For example, from Sonnet 153:

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep [line 1]
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired [line 11]

 Because of similar variances in line 11, both lines demonstrate the addition of stressed beats. In each case the line is hexameter rather than pentameter. In the first example, the first foot inverts the iamb to a trochee [-'], i. e. a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. This arrangement fits the natural pronunciation of the word.
 The second foot is a spondee [' '], i. e. a foot composed of two stressed syllables and no unstressed syllables. The purpose of the spondee is to emphasize the sickness of the speaker.)

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4. Give examples of variances in end rhyme and identify each.

(Shakespeare tends toward an even pattern rhyming abab, cdcd, efef, gg and depending on masculine rhyme, which derives from pairs of words that contain their stress on the last syllable. However, there are other types of rhyme throughout his sonnets. For example:

1. love/prove [approximate rhyme]
2. dead/astonished [unrhymed]
3. treasure/pleasure [feminine rhyme]
4. compare/are [sight rhyme]

5. Discuss how the rhyme couplet ends Shakespeare's sonnets.

(In most of Shakespeare's sonnets, the last two lines perform the task of rounding out the music as well as the thought of the verse. In general, the rhymed couplet offers a satisfying conclusion both to the rhyme scheme and to the sense of each sonnet. For example, Sonnet 42 deals with the theme of loss. The poet indicates that his friend has seduced and won his mistress. In the last two lines, however, he reevaluates his loss and discovers that, because he identifies with his friend, he believes that his mistress is still faithful to that part of him which exists in his friend.

In a similar closing, Sonnet 29 stresses the importance of fortune to human life. He concludes that he would not trade with kings his good luck at having so sweet a mistress.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. Explain why the theme of evanescence is so important to poetry.

(Not only Shakespeare, but most poets are keenly aware of the passage of time and the loss of things that cannot last. From simple examples, such as the passage of a day or night and the death of something in nature, such as a season, bird, or flower, to the more poignant examples of people who are aging and approaching the time of death, poets often consider how quickly living things fade and pass away.

To Shakespeare, the theme of evanescence is important in several ways. To the young man whom Shakespeare urges to marry and reproduce, the passage of time robs him of youth and reproductive potential. To the speaker's mistress, the passage of time brings signs of old age to moist skin, dewy eyes, and lustrous hair.

Overall, however, the poet thinks of time as an adversary that he must challenge on a greater front, the field of literary immortality. If he writes poems of lasting beauty, his name will never die. Even more to his credit, if he writes poems that capture the winsomeness of his beloved, she, too, will

remain alive and forever young in verse.)

7. Explain how the poet demonstrates vulnerability.

(The speaker of these sonnets, whom the reader cannot help identifying with the author himself, admits to sensitivity and therefore leaves himself open to hurt, discouragement, ridicule, and defeat. When other poets honor his beloved, he finds himself comparing his rivals' expertise to his own and wonders if his beloved is impressed by their verses. When he opens his heart to the devious and promiscuous dark lady and readily admits that he lies awake contemplating her beauty, he renders himself vulnerable to scorn, treachery, and the myriad negative behaviors of which the subject is capable.

In these ways, Shakespeare is no different from any other love poet. To state the effect and significance of so personal an emotion as love is to lay oneself open to attack, particularly among callous, insensitive people who may be looking for a way to inflict harm or establish superiority. The writing of love poetry is by nature an exercise in vulnerability.

At the same time that honest verse lays bare the poet's soul, however, it also creates strength through an honest, unflinching appraisal of the nature of love, which is innately connected with mental and emotional pain. Because Shakespeare has looked beneath the flimsy covering of his ego, he is the stronger for his voyage into the depths of his soul. In that respect, he outstrips his shallow enemies.)

8. What does Shakespeare reveal about love?

(Through his 154 sonnets, Shakespeare indicates that he has learned a great deal about love and his capacity to enjoy it. He learns that both the eye and the heart evaluate the beloved, and he wonders which is more valuable, the physical attraction or the emotional response to his mistress. Likewise, he learns that distractions, such as sleep and writing, do not relieve him of the compunction to think about his love object.

On another plane, the poet perceives that love brings out certain aspects of his character that other endeavors of life fail to discover. He finds himself more tolerant, more perceptive, more sensitive to beauty, and more willing to give of himself as a result of his experiences with love. Also, he discerns satisfactions of life that are missing from mere sleeping, eating, working, and playing. By dedicating himself to the woman he loves, he focuses his best traits and uses them for the benefit not only of her, but also of himself.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Explain why critics question the identity of people mentioned in the sonnets.

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(Questions of identification are common in Shakespearean analysis because most people who read his works are impressed enough to be curious about the story behind the work. The fact that readers of the sonnets wonder about the identity of the dark lady, the young man, and the rivals is a tribute to Shakespeare's artistry. Few would doubt that the intense characterization of these people is rooted in reality.)

The description of the mistress as dark in coloration and therefore different from the ideal Elizabethan beauty suggests that Shakespeare wanted to justify his choice of mistress. The sincerity with which he deals with the question of the young man's descendents is also proof that the young man is an actual person. And the speaker's pain at his mistress's interest in other poets leaves little question about the authenticity of these rivals.)

10. Discuss the effect of first person narration to the sonnets.

(Because Shakespeare utilizes first person narration in his poems, he creates a strong sense of personal involvement, as though he were describing personal experiences. For this reason, readers often think that they are reading a personal episode in his life. Unfortunately for those who hope to draw conclusions about the poet's life, this conclusion is faulty.)

The reader cannot assume that the poems detail a particular episode or series of events in the poet's life. In fact, it is possible that many of the poems are experimental verse in imitation of the poetic conventions of his day. Just as singers may create songs that emulate others' works, Shakespeare may have been testing the waters to see how he could improve on the traditional Elizabethan love sonnet.)

Questions 11 to 14 Creative Level

11. Compare Shakespeare's romantic verse with that of poets from other countries, such as Germany's Rainer Maria Rilke, Rome's Catullus, Sappho and Solomon from the eastern Mediterranean, the United States' Amy Lowell and Robert Frost, China's Li Po, Japan's haiku artists, and France's Rimbaud and Baudelaire.
12. Compare any of the sonnets with romantic passages from Shakespeare's plays. Discuss how the confines of the fourteen-line sonnet create a tension that is beneficial to poetic creativity.
13. List individual sonnets by motif and theme. Name poems which deal with compensation and death and those which feature travel or possessions as unifying motifs. For example, Sonnet 143 describes a

housewife deserting her child in order to chase a fowl that is loose in her barnyard. Sonnet 24 centers on eyes and seeing. Sonnet 25 describes fame and its effect on people. Note overlaps where individual poems fit in more than one category.

14. Explain in an oral report and recitation why Sonnet 18 is one of Shakespeare's most famous poems. Note particularly the effect of repeated **s**, **e**, and **m** sounds.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Create a scrapbook of sonnets from various times and places, such as the Victorian sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the Renaissance works of Sir Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Michael Drayton, John Milton, Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca, and Torquato Tasso, and the modern sonnets of W. H. Auden, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie, and William Ellery Leonard. Beside each inscribe the rhyme scheme and a synopsis. Include a short biography of each poet.
2. Make a wall chart of lines from Shakespeare's sonnets illustrating the following mechanics of poetry: masculine rhyme, feminine rhyme, internal rhyme, assonance, consonance, cacophony, euphony, pun, simile, metaphor, alliteration, synecdoche, sense impressions, caesura, understatement, hyperbole, antithesis, inversion, enjambment, and paradox.
3. Compose a sonnet which captures the joys of life in Elizabethan England. Keep the rhythm and lyrics light and pleasant.
4. Compose a picture of the ideal woman as revealed in Shakespeare's sonnets. Contrast her with the ideal woman as displayed in modern advertising.
5. Create a handbill which will catch the eye of prospective book buyers. Use an illustration which intrigues the reader to buy the sonnets and enjoy them.
6. Choose a series of lines from the sonnets which illustrate the playwright's ability to entertain. Post them on the bulletin board and lead a discussion of their meaning.
7. List allusions from the sonnets and explain their meaning.
8. Interview Shakespeare concerning his view of love, courtship, and marriage and their role in a full, contented life. Compare the Elizabethan attitude to romance with that expressed in modern television, movies, and romantic fiction.
9. Find evidence of Shakespeare's use of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water. Explain their significance to specific lines of poetry.

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10. Memorize the sonnet which appeals to you. Tape it. Compare your recitation to other renditions. Note how a shift in emphasis and speed can alter meaning.
11. Lead a class discussion of the reason why most of the world's great sonneteers have been men.
12. Explain in a well organized theme whether sonnets are truly suited to tender subjects, such as beauty and love, or whether poets merely follow tradition in treating these topics.

TEACHING NOTES

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VOCABULARY TEST

Circle a word in parentheses which is a synonym for the underlined word in each of the following phrases.

1. What thou dost force upon us that is old
(commence, vouchsafe, outstrip, foist)
2. In succeeding toil all forward do content
(sequent, chary, pent, twain)
3. When rocks unconquerable are not so stout
(heinous, impregnable, unsullied, extant)
4. In tender mission of love to thee
(vassalage, embassy, recompense, visage)
5. The other two, slight air and cleansing fire
(faring, prognosticating, purging, salving)
6. wherever I remain
(bestow, abide, trifle, deface)
7. the seemly clothing of my heart
(rayment, homage, bier, dearth)
8. Beauty's effect with beauty were deprived
(bereft, unprovident, deemed, wanton)
9. Disdains the cultivation
(audit, foison, tillage, tincture)
10. of thy conservation
(rank, husbandry, consecration, surfeit)
11. to stop descendents
(usurer, yore, dispersal, posterity)
12. upon error growing
(misprision, adieu, nought, impiety)
13. And the sad diviners
(commenders, augurs, assailers, gluttons)
14. mock their own forecast
(jollity, largess, delve, presage)
15. filled with you
(oblivious, chided, replete, surmounted)

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Match each phrase below with a modern interpretation. Select your answer from the lettered list.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ 1. bastard signs of fair | A. possess like a piece of land |
| _____ 2. hold in lease | B. become so intimate |
| _____ 3. acquaintance strangle | C. miserably ill |
| _____ 4. to the view | D. false pretenses of beauty |
| _____ 5. full of blame | E. ruin a friendship |
| _____ 6. come so near | F. decent woman |
| _____ 7. maid of Dian's | G. the little I have |
| _____ 8. sad distempered | H. worthy of blame |
| _____ 9. mine is thy good report | I. trained to endure pain |
| _____ 10. hate's known injury | J. in appearance |
| _____ 11. all my poverty | K. the wrong done by an enemy |
| _____ 12. swift extremity | L. any harmful hatred |
| _____ 13. all oblivious enmity | M. unskillful management |
| _____ 14. tame to sufferance | N. greatest speed |
| _____ 15. limping sway | O. I treasure your reputation |

Part II: Quotation Completion (30 points)

Complete each quotation below with a phrase from the list that follows.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Tired with all these, | A. stands least in thy control |
| _____ 2. my love is as fair as | B. a common grave |
| _____ 3. And in our faults by lies | C. from these would I be gone |
| _____ 4. a true soul when most impeached | D. yellows with their age, be scorned |
| _____ 5. prison my heart | E. that heals the sound and cures not
the disgrace |
| _____ 6. since I am near slain, | F. in thy steel bosom's ward |
| _____ 7. The earth can yield me but | G. pent in walls of glass |
| _____ 8. of such a salve can speak | H. of public honor and proud titles boast |
| _____ 9. Dear my love, you know you had a father; | I. the fairest votary took up that fire |
| _____ 10. a liquid prisoner | J. kill me outright with looks and rid
my pain |
| _____ 11. So should my papers | K. and sue a friend come debtor for my sake |
| _____ 12. Let those who in favor with their stars | L. let your son say so |
| _____ 13. but in her maiden hand | M. any mother's child |
| _____ 14. That followed it as gentle day | N. doth follow night |
| _____ 15. Thou usurer that putst forth all to use | O. we flattered be |

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Select an answer to each of the following questions. Place the letter of your response in the blank.

- _____ 1. It is obvious from the speaker's description that his love is (a) a blond woman who never notices other men (b) a dark woman who flirts freely (c) no particular woman (d) none of the above.
- _____ 2. Shakespeare's sonnets end in (a) four rhymed lines (b) a variety of patterns (c) a pair of quatrains (d) a rhymed couplet.
- _____ 3. The poet obviously believes that (a) people should forget love and enjoy life (b) treasure youth as the best part of life (c) love is worth the pain it causes (d) he can forget his mistress while he sleeps.
- _____ 4. The dark lady causes the speaker pain by (a) encouraging rival poets (b) running away (c) refusing to wear makeup (d) writing her own verses.
- _____ 5. The speaker seems acutely aware of (a) the passage of time (b) his lover's interest in money (c) how worthless his verses are (d) his patron's need of praise.
- _____ 6. After his friend wins the lady, the speaker (a) hates them both (b) still loves them both (c) loses interest in both of them (d) finds a new lover.
- _____ 7. Critics often debate (a) whether Shakespeare wrote all the sonnets (b) the time when the sonnets were published (c) the identity of the dark lady (d) whether all of the sonnets belong together.
- _____ 8. In the Shakespearean sonnet, the rhyme scheme reads (a) abab, cbcb, cdcd, fg (b) abba, abba, cde, cde (c) abba, abba, cdcd, ff (d) abab, cdcd, efef, gg.
- _____ 9. Many of Shakespeare's sonnets contain (a) puns (b) allusions to Greek mythology (c) images from nature (d) all of the above
- _____ 10. Shakespeare's sonnets were published (a) posthumously (b) by the Earl of Southampton (c) all in the seventeenth century (d) all of the above.
- _____ 11. The main difference between Italian and Shakespearean sonnets lies in (a) the rhymed lines that end the Shakespearean sonnet (b) the Italian sonnet's emphasis on love (c) the later works' use of short lines (d) the poets' attitudes toward courtship.
- _____ 12. All of Shakespeare's sonnets (a) refer to a female subject (b) employ five beats to the line (c) refer to him personally (d) all of the above.
- _____ 13. The theme of evanescence refers to (a) the fact that life passes on (b) the inconstancy of females (c) Shakespeare's belief in an afterlife (d) how fragile poetry is.
- _____ 14. Shakespeare's frequent use of the word Will (a) demonstrates the time period in which he lived (b) illustrates his use of similes (c) are examples of puns (d) indicate his interest in the future.
- _____ 15. The speaker of the poems illustrates (a) how much he wants to find the right woman to marry (b) his sensitivity (c) the dangers of living during the Elizabethan Age (d) his need for money.

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Part II: Completion (30 points)

Complete each of the following quotations with a word or phrase from the list below.

- _____ 1. And whether my angel be turned _____
- _____ 2. a woman's _____, with Nature's own hand painted, hast thou
- _____ 3. the very _____ are mute
- _____ 4. like widowed _____ after their lords' decease
- _____ 5. the purple pride which on thy soft cheek for _____ dwells
- _____ 6. resembling sire and _____ and happy mother
- _____ 7. thy image should keep open my heavy _____
- _____ 8. filled his brow with lines and _____
- _____ 9. of blood to _____ through lively veins
- _____ 10. the golden _____ of the dead . . . were shorn away
- _____ 11. look in thy _____, and tell the face thou viewest
- _____ 12. and dig deep trenches in thy beauty's _____
- _____ 13. Shall I compare thee to a summer's _____?
- _____ 14. as black as _____, as dark as night
- _____ 15. lust is perjured, _____, bloody, full of blame

birds	blush	child	complexion	day
eyelids	face	field	fiend	glass
hell	murd'rous	tresses	wombs	wrinkles

Part III: Essay Questions (40 points)

Compose themes in explanation of these lines.

1. The hardest knife ill used doth lose his edge.
2. Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
Which, used, lives the executor to be.
3. Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outline this powerful rime.
4. 'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed
When not to be receives reproach of being.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

ANSWER KEYS

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. foist | 6. abide | 11. posterity |
| 2. sequent | 7. raiment | 12. misprision |
| 3. impregnable | 8. bereft | 13. augurs |
| 4. embassy | 9. tillage | 14. presage |
| 5. purging | 10. husbandry | 15. replete |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. B | 11. G |
| 2. A | 7. F | 12. N |
| 3. E | 8. C | 13. L |
| 4. J | 9. O | 14. I |
| 5. H | 10. K | 15. M |

Part II: Quotation Completion (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. J | 11. D |
| 2. M | 7. B | 12. H |
| 3. O | 8. E | 13. I |
| 4. A | 9. L | 14. N |
| 5. F | 10. G | 15. K |

Part III: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. B | 11. A |
| 2. D | 7. C | 12. B |
| 3. C | 8. D | 13. A |
| 4. A | 9. D | 14. C |
| 5. A | 10. C | 15. B |

Part II: Completion (30 points)

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. fiend | 6. child | 11. glass |
| 2. face | 7. eyelids | 12. field |
| 3. birds | 8. wrinkles | 13. day |
| 4. wombs | 9. blush | 14. hell |
| 5. complexion | 10. tresses | 15. murd'rous |

Part III: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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