

## Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish stories and poems podcast. You'll find more information on this page:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-stories-poems.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- the poem that you can listen to in the podcast
- a comprehension activity based on the poem.

## Read the poem

### Heat

by Archibald Lampman

From plains that reel to southward, dim,  
The road runs by me white and bare;  
Up the steep hill it seems to swim  
Beyond, and melt into the glare.  
Upward half way, or it may be  
Nearer the summit, slowly steals  
A hay-cart, moving dustily  
With idly clacking wheels.

By his cart's side the wagoner  
Is slouching slowly at his ease,  
Half-hidden in the windless blur  
Of white dust puffing to his knees.  
This wagon on the height above,  
From sky to sky on either hand,  
Is the sole thing that seems to move  
In all the heat-held land.

Beyond me in the fields the sun  
Soaks in the grass and hath his will;  
I count the marguerites one by one;  
Even the buttercups are still.  
On the brook yonder not a breath  
Disturbs the spider or the midge.  
The water-bugs draw close beneath  
The cool gloom of the bridge.

Where the far elm-tree shadows flood  
Dark patches in the burning grass,  
The cows, each with her peaceful cud,  
Lie waiting for the heat to pass.  
From somewhere on the slope near by  
Into the pale depth of the noon  
A wandering thrush slides leisurely  
His thin revolving tune.

In intervals of dreams I hear  
The cricket from the droughty ground;  
The grasshoppers spin into mine ear  
A small innumerable sound.  
I lift mine eyes sometimes to gaze:  
The burning sky-line blinds my sight;  
The woods far off are blue with haze;  
The hills are drenched in light.

And yet to me not this or that  
Is always sharp or always sweet;  
In the sloped shadow of my hat  
I lean at rest, and drain the heat;  
Nay more, I think some blessed power  
Hath brought me wandering idly here:  
In the full furnace of this hour  
My thoughts grow keen and clear.

**After reading****Exercise 1**

Below are 12 statements about the text. For each one, decide if it is True or False.

1. The road seems like a river. (1st verse)
2. The author can clearly see where the hay-cart is. (1st verse)
3. The wagoner is walking straight and tall. (2nd verse)
4. The dust makes it difficult to see the wagoner. (2nd verse)
5. It is windy. (3rd verse)
6. The water-bugs seem to be hiding under the bridge. (3rd verse)
7. The cows are in the shade of a tree. (4th verse)
8. The cows are eating. (4th verse)
9. The ground is very dry. (5th verse)
10. The grasshoppers are making a loud noise. (5th verse)
11. The author says that things are not always what they seem. (6th verse)
12. The author thinks that he is there by chance. (6th verse)

**Answers**

**Exercise 1:** 1. True (T); 2. False (F); 3. F; 4. T; 5. F; 6. T; 7. T; 8. T; 9. T; 10. F; 11. T; 12. F