

Introduction

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<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;
- an optional comprehension activity.

Read the poem**Star-gazers**

by William Wordsworth

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready with the fee,
And envies him that's looking; - what an insight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Implement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they're seen? or are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be;--men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

After you read**Exercise 1**

Decide if each of the following 9 statements about the poem is True or False.

1. The telescope is floating on the waters of the Thames.
2. Lots of people are queuing to use the telescope.
3. Everyone who looks through the telescope goes away disappointed.
4. The moon doesn't really have vales and hills on it.
5. The author wonders if things are never as good in reality as they seemed before.
6. The people in the crowd have no souls.
7. The author thinks that gazing at the stars makes people think a lot.
8. The author knows exactly why people seem less happy after looking in the telescope.
9. The owner of the telescope has found himself a good spot.

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Answers

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