

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind

William Shakespeare

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616), the greatest playwright and poet in English literature, was the third of eight children born to a glovemaker in Stratford-on-Avon in England. He received little formal education. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathway and soon moved to London. Within a few years, he was well known as a leading actor and playwright. His great tragedies include Hamlet (1602), Othello (1604), King Lear (1605), and Macbeth (1606). He wrote 154 sonnets. Some of them are addressed to an attractive young man, (the Earl of Southampton whom the poet urges to marry); others to the mysterious dark lady. A love triangle - two men to a woman - is suggested in a number of sonnets. 'Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind' is about man's ingratitude. The cold winter wind does not cause so much suffering as a man's ingratitude.



A. Work in small groups and answer the following questions orally:

1. Why do you wear wollen clothes in Winter?
2. How much do you like this season?
3. Which is your favourite season?

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto this green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:

Then, heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:

Then, heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.



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Q.1. Answer the following questions very briefly:

1. Why does the poet ask the wind to blow?
2. Why does the poet call the winter wind not so unkind as man's ingratitude?
3. What makes the poet say 'Thy tooth is not so keen'?
4. Explain the mood of the poet when he says 'Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly'.
5. Explain the use of the word 'warp' in the second stanza.
6. How is nature not so cruel as man?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

ingratitude (n): lack of gratitude, unthankfulness

keen (adj): sharp, penetrating

breath (n): air drawn into or, expelled from the lungs (here) it refers to the gusts of wind

rude (adj): impolite, uncivilized, offensive

heigh-ho: sound repeated in the song for the sake of music

holly (n): an evergreen shrub with prickly leaves.

feigning (n): affectation, false pretence, imaginary

jolly (adj): cheerful, jovial, festive, joyful, merry

bitter (adj): (here) showing mental pain, full of affliction, biting cold.

high (adj): almost, near

C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. The speaker's tragic mood is very pronounced in the poem. Elaborate.
2. What does the poet mean to say "Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly"? Explain.
3. Why and how is the severe winter kinder than an ungrateful person?
4. Describe how the poet has conveyed the feelings of an afflicted man.
5. Summarise this poem in about 100 words.

C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in groups or pairs:

1. Gratitude is a mark of civility.
2. Everything is fair in love and war.

C.3. COMPOSITION:

Write a paragraph in about 100 words on each of the following:

1. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
2. A cold winter morning.

D.1. WORD STUDY

Ex.1. Correct the spelling of the following words:

ungratitude breath feigning frease

Ex.2. What words do you use for 'thou', 'thy', 'dost', and 'art' in modern English?

Ex.3. Use the following words both as nouns and verbs in meaningful sentences bringing out the difference in their meanings:

blow (v)	blow (n)	benefit (v)	benefit (n)
sting (v)	sting (n)	love (v)	love (n)
man (v)	man (n)		

D.2. Word Formation

Read the following lines carefully:

Freeze, freeze, thou, bitter sky

Thou dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot

'Forgot' is the past form of forget; other words derived from forget are as follows:

forgot,	forgets,	forgetting,	forgot,
forgotten,	forgetful,	forgetfulness,	forgettable

Ex. Write as many words derived from the following verbs as possible in the same way.

Hope

thank

charm

sing

D. 3. Word Meaning

Ex. 1. Find from the lesson words the meanings of which have been given on the left hand side in column A. The last part of each word is given in column B.

A	B
unthankfulnessude
affectation, false pretenceing
joyful, jovially
an evergreen, shrub with prickly leavesly
Impolite, uncivilizedde
air drawn into or, expelled from the lungsth
full of afflictionter
sharp, penetratingen

Ex. 2. Complete the following with appropriate form of the word given in the brackets:

- (love, bite, benefit, water, friend, keen, bitter, feign, rude, freeze)
- His for the arts is worth appreciating.
 - I have a relationship with my subordinates.
 - He is his plants.
 - He, illness and did not go to school.
 - Many boys are by stray dogs in my school locality everyday.
 - It the temperature drops low, water.....
 - Even in summer there are some areas in Kashmir where it is cold.
 - There are many programmes launched by the Tata Steel its employers.
 - I am unable to understand why you shared to me.
 - His nature impressed everyone.

'-ship' is the suffix in 'friendship'. Write five more words in which 'ship' has been used as a suffix and use them in sentences of your own.
e.g. Membership

E. GRAMMAR

Examine the following forms of the Verbs 'freeze' carefully -
freeze - froze - frozen - freezing

Ex. Give different forms of the given Verbs as illustrated above.

rise

sing

see

below

grow

flow

have

bend

F. ACTIVITY

1. Write a report on the sufferings caused by winter wind in a jungle.

G. TRANSLATION

Translate the poem into Hindi or any other language that you know.

