

Literary Elements

The excerpt below is from a "Song of the Redwood Tree," a section of Leaves of Grass, by the poet Walt Whitman (1819–1892). Read the excerpt and answer the question.

From "Song of the Redwood Tree" by Walt Whitman

**The flashing and golden pageant of California,
The sudden and gorgeous drama, the sunny and ample lands,
The long and varied stretch from Puget sound to Colorado south,
Lands bathed in sweeter, rarer, healthier air, valleys and mountain cliffs,
The fields of Nature long prepared and fallow, the silent, cyclic chemistry,
The slow and steady ages plodding, the unoccupied surface ripening,
 the rich ores forming beneath;
At last the New arriving, assuming, taking possession,
A swarming and busy race settling and organizing everywhere,
Ships coming in from the whole round world, and going out to the
 whole world,
To India and China and Australia and the thousand island paradises
 of the Pacific,
Populous cities, the latest inventions, the steamers on the rivers,
 the railroads, with many a thrifty farm, with machinery,
And wool and wheat and the grape, and diggings of yellow gold.**

1. What does the author's style tell the reader about how to interpret this excerpt?

A. The author wants to give the readers a sweeping vision of this time and place in America's history.

B. The author believes that only lofty thoughts are the proper subject of poetry.

C. The author wants to reveal his subject—America—through the usual conventions of poetry—rhyme; symbolism; and imagery, such as similes, metaphors, and personification.

D. To the author, philosophical views are more important than observations.

2. Of the following, which literary device characterizes Whitman's poetry?

A. Metaphores

B. Lists

C. Irony

D. Rhyme

Rain in the Summer

**How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!**

**How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!**

**Across the windowpane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!**

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

3. Which clues help express the tone of this poem?

A. In all three stanzas, most of the words that rhyme are related, in some way, to water. By using the words in this way, the author suggests a tone of desperateness. The need for rain is urgent, and it has finally arrived!

B. Exclamation marks are used throughout the poem to show how excited the author is about the return of the rain

C. Words such as muddy, struggles, and fiery are used to describe the gloomy feeling the author has towards rain.

D. Short line lengths suggest an informal tone. The author takes notice of the rainstorm with little interest and no show of emotion.

4. Read the passage and answer the question.

Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence—thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden. At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration burst upon him! Nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration. He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work.

Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—he was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. Tom went on whitewashing—paid no attention to the steamboat. Ben stared a moment and then said: "Hi-YI! YOU'RE up a stump, ain't you!"

No answer. Tom gave his brush another gentle sweep and surveyed the result. Ben ranged up alongside of him. Tom's mouth watered for the apple, but he stuck to his work. Ben said: "Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?"

Tom wheeled suddenly and said: "Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."

"Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther WORK—wouldn't you? Course you would!"

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: "What do you call work?"

"Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you LIKE it?"

"Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?"

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. "Say, Tom, let ME whitewash a little."

Tom considered, was about to consent, but he altered his mind. "No—no, I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence. I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done."

"Oh come, now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I'd let YOU, if you was me, Tom."

"Ben, I'd like to, honest injun; but if you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—"

"Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I'll give you the core of my apple."

"Well, here—No, Ben, now don't. I'm afeard—"

"I'll give you ALL of it!"

Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had twelve marbles, part of a harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass door-knob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while, plenty of company, and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

In this work, what does the use of dialect accomplish?

- A. It makes the boys seem real and natural.**
- B. It evokes the feel of small town life.**
- C. It adds to the humor.**
- D. All of the above**

5. What literary elements does Mark Twain use to enhance the humor of this situation?

- A. irony and exaggeration**
- B. simile and symbolism**
- C. personification and literalism**
- D. all of the above**