

UNIT 11

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Edward FitzGerald (1809 - 1883)

Students Learning Outcomes:

On the completion of this unit, the students will be able to:

- skim text to infer main idea / theme.
- comprehend text by applying critical thinking.
- locate examples to support an opinion.
- write an essay on a general subject.
- recognize and use colon.
- recognize and use sentence inversion for various purposes.

Pre-reading:

- What is your opinion about the worldly life?
- Should we spend our lives for the worldly gains only?

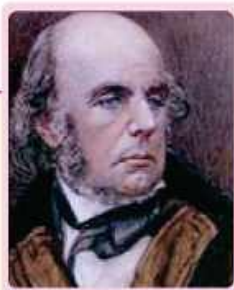
AWAKE! For Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:
And Lo! The Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes-or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two is gone.

There was a Door to which I found no Key;
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seem'd and then no more of Thee and Me.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang.
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!



About the Poet

Edward FitzGerald (1809 - 1883)

He was born at Bradfield and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was an English poet and writer and is best known as the poet of the first and most famous English translation of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam." His other works were largely translations from Greek.

Reading and Thinking Skills

1. Answer the following questions.

- What does "The Worldly Hope" mean?
- Why has "Omar Khayyam" compared desert snow with the temporary worldly hopes?
- Explain in your own words the Rubai "AWAKE! For Morning in the Bowl of Night."
- What does "The Moving Finger" mean?
- Write down the main theme of the Rubai "There was a Door to which I found no key."
- Why does the poet compare "Spring with Youth"?
- What is the main theme of the Rubai "Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!"

2. Choose the correct answer.

- i) When the sun rises, the stars:
a) appear b) vanish
c) disappear d) burn
- ii) The Hunter of the East means:
a) stars b) sun
c) son d) earth
- iii) In Rubaiyat of Omer Khayyam, the word manuscript means:
a) destiny b) period
c) life d) death
- iv) We can change our destiny by:
a) piety b) intelligence
c) tears d) nothing
- v) The snow in the desert vanishes in:
a) few months b) some years
c) two hours d) twelve hours

3. Mark the sentences as true or false.

- i) The sun has put the stars to flight.
- ii) The worldly hope remains forever.
- iii) We can change our destiny by piety.
- iv) The youth ends very soon.
- v) The nightingale sings throughout the year.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Critical Thinking

What lesson do you get after reading "The Rubaiyat of Omer Khayyam?"

Examples to support an opinion

The writer or poet presents his / her opinion to persuade the readers.

In order to support his / her opinion, the writer or poet gives examples and reasons.

Activity

Read the poem, "The Rubaiyat of Omer Khayyam" and discuss the opinion of the poet regarding the world and our lives. Write down the examples which the poet has given to support his opinion.

Writing Skills

Research Report

Write a research report on "Purpose of man's creation."

Essay Writing

1. Write a general essay on "Charms of Youth."
2. Write down the themes of Rubaiyat.

Grammar

Colon

(a) Use a *colon* to introduce a list of items.

(Note: Do not use a colon to introduce a list that is the complement of a verb or the object of a preposition.)

Examples:

- i) For the picnic, you should bring these items: three plates, five cups and a knife.
- ii) The items that we should bring for picnic are: three plates, five cups and a knife. (Incorrect)

(b) Use a *colon* to introduce a statement or quotation.

Examples:

- i) William Congreve once made this statement: "Music has charms to soothe the savage beast". (colon – quotation formally announced)

- ii) It was William Congreve who said, "Music has charms to soothe the savage beast". (comma – quotation not formally introduced)
- (c) **Use a colon between independent clauses when the second clause explains or summarizes the first clause.**

Example:

- i) The captain was right: we should have bowled first.
- (d) **Use colon between the chapter and verse of a Quranic reference.**
Al-Baqara – 2:124, Al-Ibrahim – 14:35
- (e) **Use a colon between the hour and the minute of a time reference.**
9:45 a.m 12:00 a.m 5:00 p.m

Activity

Use colon in the following sentences.

- i) Cook these dishes for the party meat, rice and fish.
- ii) The Principal announced the result Ahmed got first position.
- iii) In order to have a safe journey, you should follow these instructions tie seat belt, drive with normal speed and carefully.
- iv) He will arrive at 5 45 p.m.
- v) We sell following items books, notebooks, pencils etc.

Sentence Inversion

Inversion, also known as “anastrophe”, is a literary technique in which the normal order of words is reversed, in order to achieve a particular effect of emphasis or meter.

Inversion Techniques

Inversion is achieved by doing the following:

- Placing an adjective after the noun it qualifies, e.g. The soldier strong.
- Placing a verb before its subject e.g. Shouts the policeman.
- Placing a noun before its preposition e.g. World between.

In the English language, there are inversions that are part of its

grammar structure, and are quite common in their use. For instance, inversion always occurs in interrogative statements where verbs, or auxiliaries, or helping verbs are placed before their subjects. Similarly, inversion happens in typical exclamatory sentences where objects are placed before their verbs and subjects, and preceded by a wh-word, such as the following examples of inversion:

- What a beautiful picture it is!
- Where in the world were you!
- How wonderful the weather is today!

Examples of Inversion in Literature

Apart from the above-mentioned common inversions, some unusual inversions are employed in literature by writers, in order to achieve some special artistic effects.

Example – (1): Romeo and Juliet (by William Shakespeare)

It was a common practice in the days of William Shakespeare to use inversions. Look at an example of inversion from Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 5.

“Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and wise and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her,
Shall have the chinks.”

Example – (2): Kubla Khan (By Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

Inversion examples are more common in poetry than prose. Inversion creates meter and rhyme in the lines. Coleridge uses inversion artistically in his renowned poem Kubla Khan:

“In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.”
The inversions enhance the artistic effect of the poem.

Functions of Inversion

Like all literary devices, the main function of inversion in prose or poetry is to help writers achieve stylistic effect, like laying an emphasis on a particular point, or changing the focus of the readers from a particular point. In poetry, inversions are regularly used to create rhythm, meter, or rhyming scheme in the lines.

Activity

Identify the inversions in the following sentences.

- i) What an interesting story this is!
- ii) "Stop", shouted the king loudly.
- iii) How wonderful the weather is today!
- iv) To me alone there came a thought of grief.
- v) How wonderful was he teaching!