William Wordsworth
Worksheets

Poet Laureate

In 1843, after the death of his colleague, Robert Southey, Wordsworth became the only Poet Laureate to write no official verses. Can you write a short biographical narrative about him?

Literary Movements

Literary movements are categorized through shared traits of style, genre and subject. Robert Southey marked the influence of poets such as Wordsworth. Can you complete the paragraph and add any additional research for this activity?

Poetry Card

Poetry is one of the most enduring forms of literature in history. Given the poetry cards, choose a pattern (vertical, diagonal, horizontal) and tell us something about it.
William Wordsworth Facts

William Wordsworth was a leading Romantic poet at the end of the 18th century. His epic autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, is considered one of the remarkable achievements of English Romanticism.

Early Life

★ William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumberland, England. He was the second child of John Wordsworth and Ann Cookson. At the age 13, William and his four siblings became orphans. Despite their misfortune, he attended the Hawkshead Grammar School where he first fell in love with poetry. After a few years, he entered St. John's College in Cambridge until he graduated in 1791.
In 1790, amidst the French Revolution, Wordsworth visited France. He witnessed the power of poetry and ideals of politics. In addition, Wordsworth also visited Switzerland and Italy.

While in France, Wordsworth became interested in the struggles and language of the common people. He also met and fell in love with Annette Vallon, with whom he had a daughter, Caroline, out of wedlock. By 1793, the two separated after the declaration of war between England and France. That same year, his earliest poetry was published in the collections, An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches.

By 1802, Wordsworth returned to France with his sister Dorothy. He finally met his daughter, Caroline. Later that year, he married Mary Hutchinson, another French woman, with whom he had five children.
William Wordsworth Facts

William Wordsworth’s Literary Career

★ In 1795, he met poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. They became friends and worked together to publish *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Their collection of poetry included Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey*.

★ Wordsworth tried to use language that the common people would understand. He emphasized the existing social hierarchy of those times.

★ After the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, he started writing *The Prelude*. *The Prelude* is an autobiographical poem in blank verse that depicts one’s love for nature and spiritual life. It consisted of 14 books that were revised several times and published posthumously. Many believed that it gave birth to a new genre of poetry.

★ In 1796, Wordsworth wrote his only play, *The Borderers*. The tragedy was set during King Henry III’s reign, when Scottish rovers were in conflict with England’s north.

★ Wordsworth, Coleridge and Dorothy travelled to Germany in 1798. Despite homesickness, he was able to write *The Lucy Poems*. After a year, he went back to England with his sister. At the Lake District, Coleridge and Wordsworth met another poet, Robert Southey. They came to be known as the Lake Poets.

★ By 1803, he wrote *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*, which were published in 1807, as part of his *Poems in Two Volumes*. 
William Wordsworth Facts

★ Following the death of two of his young children in 1812, Wordsworth produced works that moved one’s emotions. The successive deaths of his colleagues, William Green (1823), Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Charles Lamb (1834), and James Hogg (1835), added to the deep melancholy of Wordsworth. The main themes of his works encompassed death, separation and abandonment.

★ In 1818, Wordsworth’s philosophical maturity began to emerge, as he became a supporter of the conservative Tories.

★ By 1838, the University of Durham gave Wordsworth an honorary doctorate degree in Civil Law. After a year, the University of Oxford did the same.

★ The sudden death of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, devastated him and he lost the will to write anymore.

Death and Legacy

★ On April 23, 1850, William Wordsworth died of pleurisy at his home at Rydal Mount, Westmorland, England. He was buried at St. Oswald’s Church, Grasmere.

★ Several months after his death, his widow, Mary, published *The Prelude*, also known as *Poem to Coleridge*.

★ In 1843, he became the only Poet Laureate to write no official verses.

Gravestone of William Wordsworth in Grasmere

★ Some of his poems include *Upon Westminster Bridge* (1801), *Miscellaneous Sonnets* (1807), *The Excursion* (1814), *Peter Bell* (1819), *The River Duddon* (1820), *Yarrow Revisited* (1835), and *The Recluse* (1888).
In 1843, after the death of his colleague, Robert Southey, Wordsworth became the only Poet Laureate to write no official verses. Can you write a short biographical narrative about him?

John Dryden was the first British Poet Laureate, in 1668, appointed by Charles II.
William Wordsworth was one of the English poets who launched the Romantic era of literature in Europe. Can you name the others?

JOHN KEATS
WILLIAM BLAKE
LORD BYRON
PERCY SHELLEY
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Literary movements are categorized through the shared traits of style, genre and subject. Romanticism marked the influence of poets such as William Wordsworth. Can you complete the profiling? Do additional research for this activity.
Wordsworth’s first trip to France opened his eyes to political philosophies and maturity in poetry. Briefly describe what happened in the events pictured below.

A: The Storming of the Bastille
B: Reign of Terror
C: The Tennis Court Oath
D: Women’s March on Versailles
Words Worth

What are the words worth? Give meaning to important terms related to the literary career of William Wordsworth.

MEANING

ROMANTICISM

POETRY

MEANING

MEANING

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

MEANING

POET LAUREATE
Also known as *Daffodils*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* was written by Wordsworth from 1804 to 1807. It was inspired by his journey to Europe. Complete the lines using the photo clues.

I wandered lonely as a ______
That floats on high o’er vales and ______,
When all at once I saw a ______,
A host, of golden ______;
Beside the lake, beneath the_______,
Fluttering and ________ in the breeze.
Continuous as the ______that shine
And twinkle on the ______,
The stretched in never-ending ______
Along the margin of a bay
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their ______in sprightly dance.
The Prelude: Emotions

The Prelude was an autobiographical poem written in blank verse. It revealed much about Wordsworth’s life. Posthumously, it was published by his widow, Mary. Read the initial parts of The Prelude and look for emotions mentioned. Use the link below for an online copy.

1. __________
2. __________
3. __________
4. __________
5. __________
6. __________
7. __________
8. __________
9. __________
10. __________

A blank verse is a type of poem without rhyme but has iambic pentameter.

http://www.bartleby.com/145/ww287.html
William Wordsworth was known for using figures of speech in his poems. Can you complete the fact table below? Do additional research of his works for this activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure of Speech</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>“I wandered lonely as a cloud”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uses extreme exaggeration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A figure of speech conveys meaning by comparing one thing to another.
Poetry is one of the most enduring forms of literature in history. Given the poetry cards, choose a pattern (vertical, diagonal, horizontal) and tell us something about it.

William Wordsworth
William Shakespeare
John Donne
Oscar Wilde
Edgar Allan Poe
John Keats
Emily Dickinson
Lord Byron
Mark Twain
Later in Wordsworth life, he produced works with gloomy and sad themes after the death of his children and several friends. Can you compose a free verse poem remembering a loved one you have lost?