

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

9th Avenue, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi – 110092

Session: 2025-2026 – Notes

Class:X.

Subject:English.

Topic: Poem – Ozymandias

Answer the following questions:

Q1. Look Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" Who is Ozymandias referring to when he speaks of 'ye Mighty'? Why should they despair?

Ans. Here, Ozymandias is addressing all those who are in the pursuit of power and glory for themselves. The works of his lifetime were so many, his achievements could not be equalled by anyone. If anyone even tried, they would be put to shame, be humbled.

Q2. Bring out the irony in the poem.

Ans. The life of Ozymandias and his end are so different. All his life he fought battles, expanded his kingdom, built palaces and ruled ruthlessly over his people. He looked down upon others who were lesser than himself. Today, after he has gone, the huge statue of the king is lying broken on the ground. There is not a trace of the vast kingdom. The king of the kings is lying mingled with dust and sand. Ravages of time which spare none, have wiped every trace of the king and his kingdom.

Q3. The poem re-emphasizes the idea that political power is transient but art is eternal and it survives. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

Ans. In the poem 'Ozymandias', the king portrayed as a man who is content only when he was in a state where he enjoyed power, might, worldly pleasures. After his death, nothing remained, time had wiped every trace of his kingdom, there was a vast sandy desert that remained. The magnificence of the piece of art survived the ravages of time, because even in the broken pieces the expression was finely etched, allowing the viewer to get to know the character of the man whose statue it was. This is indeed an underscoring of the ultimate transience of political power. The poem implicitly critiques such power through its suggestion that both great rulers and their kingdoms will fall to the sands of time.



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Q4. What message is conveyed through this poem?

Ans. Nothing is permanent in this world. Everything is transient and gets washed away by the tides of time. We might run after material pursuits but they do not give us permanent happiness. We are blinded by our ego, arrogance and thirst for power which are not lasting hence, can never give lasting happiness. The king tried to perpetuate his name and wanted to create all that he could to prove his might, his power to the world. But little did he realise the irony that his fate would not let anything of the sort happen. Nothing was left with time - his kingdom, his self-everything mingled with dust. Only a vast sandy desert land remained.

Q5. 'Ozymandias' and 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments' are based on the theme of time. Compare the two sonnets in terms of the manner in which Time is treated by the poets. Write your answer in about 150 words.

Ans. Both Shakespeare and Shelley, in their respective poems, speak about the destructive power of time and its impact on life which can be looked at from two different points of views. One is where time causes things to mature and grow, while the other is the course of destruction it chooses to assume at times. Time is ruthless and impartial. It treats everything and everyone in the same manner. In the two given sonnets, the poets have chosen to incorporate the destructive interpretation of time, as it achieves the goal of impacting the reader with its powerful and strong images, while also depicting the superiority of art. While Shakespeare in Not Marble, chooses to say that time ravishes every thing and all that remains is his verse. Shelly is of the opinion that nature and its ways (here sand) is the only thing that remains as everything else is destroyed by time. Shelley has however, appreciated the talent of the sculptor who had carved the broken statue of King Ozymandias.

Q6. In the poem 'Ozymandias', how does the poet show that art and language outlive the other symbols of power?

Ans. In the poem 'Ozymandias', the words 'which yet survive' imply the immortality of the work of art that the artist had created. The sculptor's hands copied and portrayed his subject's passions and his heart felt those passions and the hand was inspired to create them. Even though the sculptor's subject is now dead and his glories, kingdom and statues have crumbled to dust and have not lasted, his creation is still alive (stamped) on the otherwise lifeless stones. Through this, the poet has shown that art and language outlive the other symbols of power.



Q7. Time brings the greatest of the great to their knees. How is this true of King Ozymandias?

Ans. Ozymandias is a sonnet by PB Shelley. It conveys the idea that human glory and greatness are short lived. Time wreaks havoc on monuments and statues made by the kings to immortalize their name and fame. Thus, the poem depicts the futility and temporary nature of human glory and greatness.

Ozymandias was a great Egyptian king. He made his statue to immortalize his name and fame. With the passage of time his glory and greatness disappeared. His life-like statue lay in ruins in a desert.

A traveller from Egypt notices the broken statue of king Ozymandias. He finds two huge trunkless legs of the statue standing on a platform in a lonely desert. Near them lies, half-buried, broken face of the statue. He sees the expression of arrogance and sense of authority on the face of the statue. It was the artist's hand which reproduced the king's feelings on the face of the statue. But it was the king's heart which nourished those feelings in his heart.

The following words were written on the pedestal: "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings' The words reflect that Ozymandias was a king of kings but he did not realise that human pride and arrogance cannot live long and that time brings the greatest of the great down to their knees. Death is an imminent leveller.



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