

# TRB ENGLISH (PG)

-  English Literature from 1400 AD to 1600 AD
-  English Literature from 1601 AD to 1798 AD
-  English Literature from 1798 AD to 1850 AD
-  Literature from 1851 AD to the Present Day
-  Plays and Sonnets by Shakespeare
-  American Literature
-  Indian Writing in English and Commonwealth Literature
-  Literary Criticism
-  Language, Linguistics and Pedagogy
-  Application of Language Skills

# 1. ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM 1400 AD TO 1600 AD

## POETRY

### GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S LIFE AND WORKS

Geoffrey Chaucer occupies a unique position in the Middle Ages. He was born a commoner, but through his intellect and astute judgments of human character, he moved freely among the aristocracy. Although very little is definitely known about the details of his life, Chaucer was probably born shortly after 1340. Chaucer's father, John, was a prosperous wine merchant.

Both Chaucer's father and grandfather had minor standing at court, and Geoffrey Chaucer's own name appears in the household accounts of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster and wife to Prince Lionel. As a household servant, Chaucer probably accompanied Elizabeth on her many journeys, and he may have attended her at such dazzling entertainment as the Feast of St. George given by King Edward in 1358 for the king of France, the queen of Scotland, the king of Cyprus, and a large array of other important people. Chaucer's acquaintance with John of Gaunt (fourth son of Edward III and ancestor of Henry IV, V, and VI), who greatly influenced the poet, may date from Christmas 1357, when John was a guest of Elizabeth in Yorkshire.

Chaucer had a high-born wife, Philippa, whom he probably married as early as 1366. Chaucer may also have had a daughter, Elizabeth, and two sons, "little Lewis" (for whom he composed the *Astrolabe*, a prose work on the use of that instrument of an astronomer) and Thomas.

Chaucer was one of the most learned men of his time. He made numerous translations of prose and verse, including Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, saints' legends, sermons, French poetry by Machaut and Deschamps, and Latin and Italian poetry by Ovid, Virgil, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. He also shows a wide knowledge of medicine and physiognomy, astronomy and astrology, jurisprudence, alchemy, and early physics. His knowledge of alchemy was so thorough that, even into the seventeenth century, some alchemists themselves considered him a "master" of the science — not a pseudo-science in Chaucer's time.

According to the legend on his tomb in Westminster Abbey, the poet died on October 25, 1400.

#### Public Positions and Service

During 1359 to 1360, Chaucer served with the English army in France and was taken prisoner near Reims. He was released for ransom — toward which Edward himself contributed sixteen pounds — and returned to England. Later that same year, Chaucer travelled back to France, carrying royal letters, apparently entering the service of Edward as the king's servant and sometimes emissary.

Although he again served with the English army in France in 1369, by 1370 Chaucer was travelling abroad on a diplomatic mission for the king. Having been commissioned to negotiate with the Genoese on the choice of an English commercial port, Chaucer took his first known journey to Italy in December of 1372 and remained there until May 1373. He probably gained his knowledge of Italian poetry and painting during his visits to Genoa and Florence.

Chaucer's high standing continued during the reign of Richard, who became king in 1377. Throughout most of 1377 and 1378, his public services were performed chiefly in England. Chaucer received various appointments, including justice of the peace in Kent (1385), Clerk of the King's Works (1389), and, after his term as Clerk of the King's Works (sometime after 1390), deputy forester of the royal forest of North Petherton in Somerset. During this time, he was also was elected Knight of the Shire (1386) and served in Parliament.

Chaucer continued to receive royal gifts, including a new annuity of twenty pounds, a scarlet robe trimmed with fur, and, after 1397, an annual butt of wine (104 gallons). When Henry IV was crowned, he renewed Richard's grants and gave Chaucer an additional annuity of forty marks. Throughout his public career, Chaucer came into contact with most of the important men of London as well as with many of the great men of the Continent. We have records of his frequent dealings with the chief merchants of the city, with the so-called Lollard knights (followers of Wyclif, to whom John of Gaunt gave protection), and with the king's most important ambassadors and officials.

Payments to the poet during the last years of his life were apparently irregular, and his various "begging poems" — "Complaint to his Purse," for instance — together with records of advances which he drew from the royal Exchequer, have sometimes been taken as evidence that Chaucer died poor; but this is by no means certain. At any event, Geoffrey Chaucer's son Thomas took over Geoffrey Chaucer's new house in the garden of Westminster Abbey and remained in high court favour after Chaucer's death.

#### Chaucer's Work

Chaucer has presented caricatures of himself again and again — in such early poems as *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parliament of Fowles*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The House of Fame*, and *The Legend of Good Women*, and also in his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's narrators are, of course, not the "real" Chaucer — except in certain physical respects — but the various caricatures have much in common with one another and certainly reveal, either directly or indirectly, what Chaucer valued in a man.

With the exception of the Troilus narrator, a very complicated and special case, all Chaucer's narrators are bookish, fat, nearsighted, comically pretentious, slightly self-righteous, and apparently — because of a fundamental lack of sensitivity and refinement — thoroughly unsuccessful in the chief art of medieval heroes: love. We may be fairly sure that the spiritual and psychological qualities in these caricatures are not exactly Chaucer's. Chaucer's actual lack of pretentiousness, self-righteousness, and vulgarity lies at the heart of our response to the comic self-portraits in which he claims for himself these defects.

The ultimate effect of Chaucer's poetry is moral, but it is inadequate to describe Chaucer as a moralist, much less as a satirist. He is a genial observer of mankind, a storyteller, as well as a satirist, one whose satire is usually without real bite. He is also a reformer, but he is foremost a celebrator of life who comments shrewdly on human absurdities while being, at the same time, a lover of mankind.

## WRITING THE CANTERBURY TALES

In Medieval England, most people were illiterate. This is why Church stained glass windows and wall paintings depict bible stories- it helped the congregation follow the biblical stories. Chaucer, due to his family's wealth and connection, was one of the fortunate people who learnt to read and write.

Chaucer was not a professional writer but wrote for pleasure, for his own amusement and that of his family and friends. His poetry was a great favourite of the King's. Chaucer wrote in Middle English, writing works such as Troilus and Criseyde and House of Fame. Though not the first to write in the vernacular, he appears to be instrumental in popularising it. Whilst working as Controller of Customs and Justice of Peace in 1386, however, he began writing his most famous works- The Canterbury Tales. The Canterbury Tales, written in a combination of verse and prose, tells the story of some 30 pilgrims walking from Southwark to Canterbury on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas Beckett. Thus, The Canterbury Tales is a collection of 24 stories, told as the pilgrims make their journey to Canterbury Cathedral.

Chaucer's work is not simply a story; the Canterbury Tales is also a comment on English society at the time. The very fact that Chaucer wrote in English demonstrates his dismissal of accepted practices. Chaucer's characters offer various social insights and raise various questions concerning social class, spirituality and religion. The work was unfinished when Chaucer died.

## CHARACTER LIST

### The Knight

The Knight rides at the front of the procession described in the General Prologue, and his story is the first in the sequence. The Host clearly admires the Knight, as does the narrator. The narrator seems to

remember four main qualities of the Knight. The first is the Knight's love of ideals—"chivalrie" (prowess), "trouthe" (fidelity), "honour" (reputation), "fedom" (generosity), and "curteisie" (refinement) (General Prologue, 45–46). The second is the Knight's impressive military career. The Knight has fought in the Crusades, wars in which Europeans traveled by sea to non-Christian lands and attempted to convert whole cultures by the force of their swords. By Chaucer's time, the spirit for conducting these wars was dying out, and they were no longer undertaken as frequently. The Knight has battled the Muslims in Egypt, Spain, and Turkey, and the Russian Orthodox in Lithuania and Russia. He has also fought in formal duels. The third quality the narrator remembers about the Knight is his meek, gentle, manner. And the fourth is his "array," or dress. The Knight wears a tunic made of coarse cloth, and his coat of mail is ruststained, because he has recently returned from an expedition.

The Knight's interaction with other characters tells us a few additional facts about him. In the Prologue to the Nun's Priest's Tale, he calls out to hear something more lighthearted, saying that it deeply upsets him to hear stories about tragic falls. He would rather hear about "joye and greet solas," about men who start off in poverty climbing in fortune and attaining wealth (Nun's Priest's Prologue, 2774). The Host agrees with him, which is not surprising, since the Host has mentioned that whoever tells the tale of "best sentence and moost solaas" will win the storytelling contest (General Prologue, 798). And, at the end of the Pardoner's Tale, the Knight breaks in to stop the squabbling between the Host and the Pardoner, ordering them to kiss and make up. Ironically, though a soldier, the romantic, idealistic Knight clearly has an aversion to conflict or unhappiness of any sort.

### The Squire

The Squire is the Knight's son, accompanying him on this pilgrimage. We think he's a pretty good squire; after all, Chaucer tells us that he rides a horse well, can joust well, and he carves the meat for the Knight well at dinner. After the Franklin interrupts his tale, he praises the Squire for being everything a young man ought to be.

But, from his portrait we get the impression that the Squire is still pretty young – more of a man-boy than a man. Chaucer describes him as "embrouded" as if he were a "meede / al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede" (89 – 90) – embroidered like a meadow full of red and white flowers. That sounds more like a description of a maiden than a man! And, in his portrait, Chaucer spends a lot more time talking about how well the Squire can dance, sing, write poetry and, most importantly, indulge in serious crushes, than he does about the Squire's prowess on the battlefield. From his portrait, we end with the impression that the Squire is a teenager, a bit of a pretty boy, and prone to serious infatuations that keep him up all night.

The Squire's role in the General Prologue is probably to represent both youthfulness and femininity. Compare

his portrait to that of his father, who is a grown-up version of the Squire, or to the Monk, who is a manly man, and we can get a good picture of how Chaucer was thinking about the differences between youth and age, and femininity and masculinity, and how these different categories are all related to each other.

### The Yeoman

The Knight travels with only one servant, or yeoman, and one who looks like Robin Hood. Seriously, this guy is dressed all in green and decked out with a bow and arrows, a dagger, and a sword. His hair is short, and his face is brown, suggesting that he spends a lot of time outside. Chaucer tells us he's a forester – at home he probably takes care of the forests on the Knight's land, protecting them from outlaws and making sure nobody poaches in them. As foresters go, he's probably a good one, a conclusion we can draw because he keeps his bow and arrows in very good condition – no droopy feathers for him – so it's likely he keeps his forest in similarly tip-top shape.

We never see the Yeoman again after the General Prologue, but, from him, we learn two things about the Knight: 1) that he's not high-maintenance, because he travels with only one servant, and 2) that he owns some land – hence, his need for a forester.

### The Prioress

The Prioress is trying to be very, well, dainty. She has all these funny habits, like singing through her nose, speaking incorrect French, and eating so carefully that she never spills a drop. She does these things, Chaucer tells us, because she "peyned hir to countrefete cheere / of court" (139 – 140), or tries very hard to seem courtly. When she sees a mouse caught in a trap, she weeps, perhaps believing that this is how a damsel of the court would behave. Of course, two lines later, we learn that she has no problem feeding her hounds flesh, so her weeping over the trapped mouse is probably, like most of her habits, an affectation – a behavior the Prioress adopts to seem a certain way (in this case, like a courtly damsel), but which doesn't really reveal her true feelings.

Though the Prioress may try to seem dainty, in point of fact she's a very large woman: Chaucer tells us her forehead is a full hand-span broad and, come to think of it, she's not underfed. In keeping with her goal of seeming courtly, the Prioress is very elegantly dressed, with a string of coral beads attached to a pendant that reads "Amor Vincit Omnia," or "Love Conquers All." The beads and the pendant are interesting because this being a prioress, or nun who is in charge of a convent, we would expect her to be carrying rosary beads with a crucifix on the end. But instead she is carrying vanity beads. The pendant, which could refer to God's love, in her case more probably refers to the courtly love between a damsel and hero in one of the romances that were popular reading material for women of this time period.

So here's the thing about the Prioress: as a religious figure, she should be all kinds of things that she very clearly is not. What are these things? Well, take a look at the Parson's portrait, which represents an ideal religious figure in the General Prologue, to find out the answer. With the Prioress, our first example of someone from the religious life, we have not only our first supposedly pious person with her priorities out of whack (a situation we'll definitely see again), but also our first example of someone who's trying way too hard to be perceived a certain way, and how ridiculous that looks.

We should note that the Prioress has a nun with her who serves as her "chapelyne" or secretary, and three priests, who probably help her out by saying mass and administering the sacraments in the abbey she runs. Although we get no portraits of these pilgrims, two of them, the Second Nun, and the Nun's Priest, tell tales later on.

### The Monk

The Monk, Chaucer tells us, is a manly man. The Monk's favorite past-time is hunting, and to this end he keeps gorgeous (and probably expensive) horses and greyhounds. Like the Prioress, the Monk is all sorts of things that, as a religious figure, he should probably not be – a hunter, overfed, expensively-dressed in fur and gold jewelry, and a cultivator of expensive habits. But the Monk is willing to admit that he doesn't live a traditional religious life of hard work, study, and fasting, claiming as his excuse that he is a modern man, disdainful of the old traditions. So, out with the old fuddy-duddies like Augustine, who would have the monk slaving away over his books in a cloister, and in with the new – the new, in this case, being a comfortable life of sport, fine food and clothing, and amusements outside the monastery's walls.

Of the Monk's physical appearance, we learn that he is fat, bald, and greasy, with eyes that roll in his head. In medieval physiognomy, the practice of drawing conclusions about someone's character from their physical appearance, rolling eyes like this might be a sign of impatience and lust for food and women. This part of the Monk's portrait foreshadows the interaction between the Monk and the Host after the Tale of Melibee. At this point, before asking him to tell a tale, the Host praises the Monk's brawn and bulk and laments that he is a religious figure because, were the Monk not pledged to celibacy, he would surely impregnate lots of women! The Host says that he thinks the Monk would be a stud if given the opportunity, but considering the Monk's lack of respect for the "old" traditions of the religious life (and that mysterious love-knot pendant tying his hood), we think it's likely that he probably already is one.

With the Monk's portrait, we see another satire of religious figures who are supposed to live a monastic life of deprivation and hard work, but instead live a life of luxury and ease. Similar to the Prioress, the Monk is doing all kinds of things which, were he really pious, he would not. The Monk, though, is more self-aware about

### Changes in Character

Dryden also domesticates and simplifies the lovers. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is "infinite variety": capricious, theatrical, politically calculating and, at times, apparently ready to deal with Caesar. Dryden's Cleopatra is constant. She refuses Caesar's offer of Egypt and Syria, cannot sustain even a brief pretence of inconstancy, and declares that nature meant her to be "A wife; a silly, harmless, household dove". Her ambiguity is transferred to Alexas, who devises the deceptions that she only reluctantly accepts. Similarly, Shakespeare's Antony is a world-conqueror whose decline is shown through a long political action; Dryden's Antony is a man of feeling, more lover than general, whose tragedy is his inability to choose. These changes make the play more unified and more pathetic, though many readers feel they also make it smaller.

### Shakespeare's and Dryden's Treatments Compared

| Feature           | Shakespeare, <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> | Dryden, <i>All for Love</i>                            |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Date              | c. 1606–07; printed 1623                 | Performed 1677; printed 1678                           |
| Time span         | About ten years                          | One day (Antony's birthday)                            |
| Place             | Many places across the Roman world       | Alexandria only                                        |
| Structure         | Five acts, more than forty scenes        | Five acts, one continuous scene each                   |
| Verse             | Blank verse with prose                   | Blank verse throughout                                 |
| Octavius Caesar   | Major character on stage                 | Never appears                                          |
| Enobarbus         | Major commentator; deserts and dies      | Omitted                                                |
| Octavia           | Minor; never in Egypt                    | Comes to Alexandria with daughters; rival to Cleopatra |
| Cleopatra         | Changeable, theatrical, ambiguous        | Constant, loving, domestic in aspiration               |
| Antony's death    | Act IV; dies in the monument             | Act V; dies beside Cleopatra                           |
| Cleopatra's death | Later, after dealing with Caesar         | Immediately after Antony's, with the asp               |

### The Play's Structure

The play is a series of contests for Antony. Act I belongs to Ventidius, Act II to Cleopatra, Act III to Octavia and Dolabella, Act IV to the intrigue of jealousy, and Act V to death. Dryden's claim that every act concludes "with a turn" is accurate: Antony leaves Cleopatra at the end of Act I, returns at the end of Act II, leaves her for Octavia at the end of Act III, loses both at the end of Act IV, and is reunited with Cleopatra in death in Act V. This pendulum movement gives the play an almost geometrical design.

### Act-wise Analysis

#### Act I: Omens and the Recovery of the Soldier

The play opens in the Temple of Isis. Serapion, the priest, describes portents: the Nile has flooded out of season and then ebbed so swiftly that sea-creatures were left stranded; at midnight a whirlwind burst open the vault of the Ptolemies, the ghosts of the dead kings rose, and a voice cried "Egypt is no more!" Alexas dismisses the story as a dream but warns that the Roman camp threatens the city. We learn the situation: since Actium Antony has withdrawn into the temple, refusing to see Cleopatra and sinking into despair. Alexas, though he hates Antony's power over Egypt, must keep him in Alexandria because Cleopatra "dotes" on him.

Ventidius arrives from the East, praised even by Alexas as "an old true-stampt Roman", and angrily condemns Cleopatra's birthday "pageantry". Antony enters, keeping his birthday "With double pomp of sadness", and imagines himself as a wild man of the woods, "Of all forsaken, and forsaking all". Ventidius confronts him. The two men weep together; Antony bitterly confesses that at Actium he "fled while his soldiers fought"; Ventidius refuses to curse him and offers twelve legions waiting in Lower Syria — on one condition, that they will not fight for Cleopatra. Antony flares up, calls Ventidius a traitor, then repents. When Ventidius addresses him as "Emperor", Antony replies that this is "the style of victory" that he will never hear again; by the end of the act the same word has become a promise. Antony agrees to leave Cleopatra, saying he loves her "Beyond life, conquest, empire, all, but honour", and he goes off to battle fired with his old martial energy. Honour has won the first round.

#### Act II: Cleopatra's Counter-Attack

Cleopatra, in despair, rejects reason ("My love's a noble madness") and scorns the "respect" Antony has sent her as fit for "cold Octavia". Alexas first works on Antony with jewels and a ruby bracelet "set with bleeding hearts"; Ventidius calls the gifts poisoned, but Antony agrees to see Cleopatra "to take my leave."

The meeting is a formal trial: Antony, insisting on being "justified" before posterity, recites the history of his ruin from Julius Caesar's possession of Cleopatra to his flight at Actium. Cleopatra answers with dignity: "Caesar loved me; but I loved Antony." At the climax she produces a letter from Octavius offering her Egypt and Syria if she will abandon Antony — an offer she has refused. This

proof of fidelity overturns Ventidius's argument that she would desert Antony if she could. Antony is overwhelmed, declares that the world is a "gewgaw" fit for Caesar, and resolves to stay. Ventidius departs crying "O women! women! women!" Love has won the second round, and Antony plans a sally against Caesar's camp.

### **Act III: Victory, Dolabella and Octavia**

Act III opens with a triumphal ceremony: Antony has won a skirmish, and Cleopatra crowns him with laurel ("My brighter Venus!" — "O my greater Mars!"). Ventidius warns that one victory cannot defeat Caesar, who "has all the world". Antony speaks with longing of Dolabella, the friend he banished because he feared Dolabella loved Cleopatra; Ventidius brings Dolabella in, now arrived from Caesar's camp. The reunion is warm, but Dolabella joins Ventidius in criticising Antony's love, and Ventidius brutally calls it "plain dotage". Dolabella brings terms of peace from Caesar.

Then Ventidius produces his masterstroke: Octavia enters, leading Antony's two little daughters. Octavia is proud and dignified; she will not beg, but offers to secure Antony's freedom and the rule of the East, asking only to keep "the barren name of wife". Antony resists being obliged to one who acts only from duty, but when Octavia sends the children to him ("You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms; / And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist"), and Ventidius, Dolabella, Octavia and the children cry in turn "Emperor!", "Friend!", "Husband!", "Father!", he yields: "I am vanquished". He agrees to go to Caesar's camp.

The act ends with the confrontation of Octavia and Cleopatra — the scene the Preface defends against French decorum. Their exchange is a sharp duel of repartee. Octavia, "A Roman: / A name, that makes and can unmake a queen", accuses Cleopatra of ruining Antony with a rhetorical catalogue ending "At Actium, who betrayed him? Cleopatra." Cleopatra replies: "Yet she, who loves him best, is Cleopatra", and claims that she has suffered more, having lost her honour and fame to bear "the branded name of mistress". Octavia leaves; Cleopatra nearly faints. Duty, family and honour have won the third round.

### **Act IV: Jealousy and Deception**

Unable to tell Cleopatra himself that he is leaving, Antony sends Dolabella, whose soliloquy contains the famous line "Men are but children of a larger growth". Alexas persuades Cleopatra to make Antony jealous by encouraging Dolabella; she agrees reluctantly, protesting that her love "can neither hide it where it is, / Nor show it where it is not." Dolabella, half in love, delivers a false and cruel version of Antony's farewell; Cleopatra faints; Dolabella confesses the lie, and Cleopatra in turn admits that her kindness was feigned. When she takes his hand in gratitude, Ventidius and Octavia, watching from a distance, misread the gesture.

Ventidius then tells Antony, with Octavia as witness, that Cleopatra and Dolabella are lovers. Antony refuses

to believe it, but when Alexas, called in to defend the queen, hints that Dolabella "deserves her best", Antony's jealousy exposes how much he still loves Cleopatra. Octavia sees that he has returned to her only by half, and leaves him for ever with the line "I despair / To have you whole, and scorn to take you half." Antony then turns on Dolabella and Cleopatra as "serpents" who have betrayed him, refuses to believe their protestations, and banishes both. The trick designed to win Antony back has driven away Octavia and Cleopatra alike.

### **Act V: The Catastrophe**

In Act V the political and personal plots collapse together. Cleopatra, banished, reproaches Alexas; then Serapion reports from the Pharos that the Egyptian fleet has not fought at all: it has gone over to Caesar. Antony, raging, believes Cleopatra has betrayed him. Alexas, in a last attempt to save himself and her, tells Antony that Cleopatra has stabbed herself and died with his name on her lips. Antony, convinced now of her innocence, has nothing left to fight for: his power and empire "Were but my merchandise to buy her love".

He asks Ventidius to kill him. Ventidius agrees, asks Antony to turn his face, and then kills himself instead, refusing to outlive or strike his master. Antony falls on his sword but misses his heart. Cleopatra arrives, having learnt of Alexas's lie, and Antony dies in her arms, reconciled, speaking of their "Ten years' love" in which not a moment was lost. Cleopatra then resolves to die not as a mistress but as a wife: "his wife, my Charmion! / For 'tis to that high title I aspire". Dressed in her crown and robes, as when she first met him on the Cydnus, she takes the asp, and Iras and Charmion die with her. Serapion enters as Caesar reaches the gates, and closes the play with the image of the lovers seated in state:

Sleep, blest pair, Secure from human chance, long ages out, While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb; And fame to late posterity shall tell, No lovers lived so great, or died so well.

**Common Confusion:** In Act V it is Ventidius who dies first, killing himself rather than kill Antony; Antony then falls on his sword. Antony is reunited with Cleopatra before he dies, and Cleopatra dies immediately after him, crowned and seated beside his body. Neither Octavius nor any Roman soldier appears at the end; Serapion speaks the final lines.

### **Characters**

#### **Antony**

Ventidius's description in Act I is the key to Antony: virtue is his path, but it is sometimes too narrow for his "vast soul", so that he bounds into vice and then judges himself with savage remorse. He is generous, impulsive and transparent — "a shallow-forded stream, / Seen to the bottom". His tragedy is irresolution: pulled by friendship, love, family and jealousy in turn, he yields to the latest appeal. This makes him less heroic than Shakespeare's Antony but more pitiable, fitting Dryden's aim of a hero

neither perfectly good nor wholly wicked. His death is an act of love rather than of Roman pride, though he still means to die "as a Roman ought".

### **Cleopatra**

Dryden's Cleopatra is a queen who wishes to be a wife. Passionate and proud but faithful, she has her truth tested and confirmed throughout: she refuses Caesar's kingdoms, fails at the jealousy trick and dies to join Antony. She scorns "respect" as fit only for a wife, yet aspires above all to that title, having lost honour and fame to bear "the branded name of mistress". Her death in royal dress is both a triumph over Caesar and a symbolic marriage. Less dazzling than Shakespeare's heroine, she is more consistent, suiting the Restoration taste for constancy and pathos.

### **Octavia**

Octavia embodies Roman virtue and lawful marriage. She is no passive victim but a proud woman who will not take Antony's love "as alms", and her parting line in Act IV shows a dignity Antony cannot match. Her strength creates the problem the Preface admits: pity is divided between wife and mistress.

### **Ventidius**

Ventidius is the plain soldier, the voice of Rome, honour and duty, incorruptible enough to refuse Cleopatra's jewels. Yet he is no mere mouthpiece: his love for Antony is personal, and his methods are not always fair — he uses the children and colours what he has seen. His suicide in Act V, deceiving Antony for "the first time" rather than kill him, is the play's supreme act of loyalty.

### **Dolabella**

Dolabella, cast "in so soft a mould" that a feigned story moves him to tears, is bound to Antony in a friendship of perfect union ("he was I, I he"), which makes his attraction to Cleopatra a test of loyalty. He fails only partly — lying out of love, then confessing — and embodies friendship that Antony wrongly believes betrayed.

### **Alexas**

Alexas, the eunuch, is the chief intriguer, serving Egypt and his own survival. He devises the bracelet scheme, the jealousy plot and the false report of Cleopatra's death, and is ready to bargain with Caesar; his Act III soliloquy reveals bitterness at being "Cast out from nature". By transferring cunning from Cleopatra to Alexas, Dryden purifies his heroine.

### **Minor Characters**

Serapion, the priest of Isis, frames the play with his omens and his closing elegy. Charmion and Iras are loyal to death. Antony's daughters speak a single word, but their presence decides Act III.

### **Themes**

#### **Love and Honour**

The conflict between love and honour, inherited from the heroic play, is the backbone of the action. Honour

means Roman duty, military fame and loyalty to wife and country; love means Cleopatra. Antony's claim that he loves her "Beyond life, conquest, empire, all, but honour" states a hierarchy he cannot maintain. Unlike the heroic play, *All for Love* neither crowns honour nor rewards the hero with both: love wins, but only through the loss of everything else.

#### **Public Duty and Private Desire**

Ventidius and Octavia speak for public obligation, Cleopatra for private feeling. Antony is a public man who longs for a private life: his fantasy of living as "a commoner of nature" in Act I and his dying vision of walking "hand in hand" with Cleopatra among lovers' ghosts express a wish to escape history. Dryden makes the private world attractive without denying its public cost.

#### **Political Power**

Political power is present even though Caesar never appears: the priests and Alexas calculate how to survive, Ventidius counts legions, and the fleet changes sides. Antony's scorn for Octavius as one whom nature "meant ... for an usurer" contrasts heroic generosity with prudent policy — and policy wins.

#### **Loyalty and Betrayal**

The play is full of suspected and actual betrayals: Antony's of Octavia, Cleopatra's supposed betrayal at Actium, Dolabella's apparent betrayal of friendship, the fleet's real desertion and Alexas's deceptions. Against these stand Ventidius's loyalty to Antony, Charmion's and Iras's to Cleopatra, and Cleopatra's own. The irony is that Antony, so loyal in feeling, cannot tell true loyalty from false.

#### **Tragic Choice**

Above all, the play dramatises choice. The Preface insists that the lovers' crimes were "wholly voluntary; since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power." The omens of Act I suggest doom, yet the action turns on decisions freely made and unmade, so that the play's power comes from sympathy for weakness rather than awe at destiny.

#### **Form and Technique**

##### **Blank Verse**

Dryden's blank verse is lucid and rhetorically controlled. It lacks the density of Shakespeare's late style but is flexible, musical and suited to argument and pathos. Lines split between speakers create rapid exchanges ("Art thou Ventidius?" — "Are you Antony?"); extended similes heighten feeling; each act closes with a rhymed couplet marking the turn; and sententious lines ("Men are but children of a larger growth") show the neoclassical taste for general truths.

##### **Unity, Construction and Characterisation**

Construction is the play's great strength. Every scene bears on the single question of whether Antony will stay with Cleopatra, and characters enter as instruments

in that struggle. Parallel scenes reinforce the design: Antony's trial of Cleopatra in Act II is answered by Octavia's accusation in Act III, and Ventidius's "Emperor!" in Act I is echoed by the chorus of names in Act III. Characterisation works through debate and contrasting pairs — Ventidius and Alexas, Octavia and Cleopatra, Ventidius and Dolabella. The cost is that characters can seem to represent positions; the gain is clarity and intellectual tension.

### The Tragic Ending

The ending aims at pity and admiration. The deaths of Ventidius, Antony and Cleopatra are compressed into one movement, and the final tableau is staged as coronation and marriage. Unlike Shakespeare, Dryden neither lets Cleopatra negotiate with Caesar nor gives Caesar the last word; an Egyptian priest praises the lovers. The world is lost, but love is vindicated before posterity.

### Comparison with Shakespeare

Beyond the structural differences in Table 13.1, Shakespeare's play is panoramic, political and ambiguous: it sets Rome and Egypt against each other as whole ways of life, leaves Cleopatra's sincerity open to doubt, and uses an extravagant, hyperbolic poetry. Dryden's is concentrated, domestic and morally clearer: it reduces the conflict to a sequence of personal appeals and uses a lucid, controlled verse. Shakespeare gives the greater sense of historical scale and human mystery; Dryden gives greater unity, symmetry and pathos. Each expresses its age — the Jacobean delight in variety and paradox, and the Restoration desire for order and decorum.

### Critical Interpretations

From the beginning *All for Love* was regarded as Dryden's finest tragedy. Dryden himself said that it was the only play he had written for himself rather than for the public, a remark that Samuel Johnson recorded in his *Life of Dryden* (1779). In the eighteenth century it largely displaced Shakespeare's play from the stage. Sir Walter Scott, who edited Dryden's works (1808), shared the high estimate while recognising the gulf between the two dramatists. Romantic and later critics, reverencing Shakespeare, were less generous, seeing an elegant but diminished version whose regularity was bought at the price of imaginative grandeur.

Twentieth-century criticism has been more balanced, praising the play's craftsmanship and lucidity and judging it as a different kind of drama rather than a failed imitation. Eugene Waith's study *The Herculean Hero* (1962) places Dryden's heroes in the tradition of the larger-than-life warrior who stands outside ordinary morality. Other critics stress the play's movement from the heroic play toward the "pathetic" tragedy of the later Restoration, in which pity for suffering replaces admiration for greatness; still others read it politically, as a study of a ruler's private pleasures in conflict with public duty. The play is best described as a neoclassical tragedy grown out of the

heroic play: it keeps the conflict of love and honour but drops rhyme and rant, and it observes the unities and decorum of French drama while rejecting French over-refinement.

## RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN: THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

### Sheridan's Life and Literary Context

#### Dublin, Harrow and Bath

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in Dublin on 30 October 1751. His father, Thomas Sheridan, was an actor, theatre manager and teacher of elocution; his mother, Frances Sheridan, was a novelist and dramatist, author of *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*. The theatre was therefore the family business. Educated at Harrow School (1762–68), he settled with his family in 1770 in Bath, the fashionable spa whose assemblies, gossip and marriage market later supplied the setting of *The Rivals*.

#### Elizabeth Linley and the Duels

At Bath Sheridan fell in love with Elizabeth Ann Linley, a celebrated young singer pursued by unwelcome suitors, among them a married man, Captain Thomas Mathews. In 1772 Sheridan escorted her to France, ostensibly to place her in a convent, and the episode led to two duels with Mathews; in the second, fought near Bath in July 1772, Sheridan was seriously wounded. He married Elizabeth Linley in 1773.

#### The Dramatist and Manager

Sheridan's dramatic career was brilliant and brief. *The Rivals* opened at Covent Garden in January 1775; it failed on the first night, was quickly revised and recast, and became a lasting success, famous for Mrs Malaprop, whose misapplied words gave the language the term "malapropism". The farce *St Patrick's Day* and the comic opera *The Duenna*, written with his father-in-law Thomas Linley, followed in the same year. In 1776 Sheridan, with partners, bought David Garrick's share of the Drury Lane Theatre, becoming its manager; he acquired the remaining share in 1778. *A Trip to Scarborough* (1777) adapted Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*. *The School for Scandal* was first performed at Drury Lane on 8 May 1777. *The Critic* (1779), a burlesque of theatrical rehearsal and puffery featuring Mr Puff and Sir Fretful Plagiary, was his last major comedy.

#### Sheridan's principal plays

| Play                          | Year | Kind                                        |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Rivals</i>             | 1775 | Comedy; Mrs Malaprop                        |
| <i>St Patrick's Day</i>       | 1775 | Farce                                       |
| <i>The Duenna</i>             | 1775 | Comic opera                                 |
| <i>A Trip to Scarborough</i>  | 1777 | Adaptation of Vanbrugh's <i>The Relapse</i> |
| <i>The School for Scandal</i> | 1777 | Comedy of manners                           |

In Germany in the 1920s, **Expressionism** and the political theatre of Erwin Piscator led to Brecht's **Epic Theatre**, which rejected illusion and emotional identification. Brecht's influence on British theatre became strong after the Berliner Ensemble's London visit of 1956.

The post-war British stage was transformed after 1956. The English Stage Company at the Royal Court promoted new writing. **Social realism** (Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Shelagh Delaney), the **Theatre of the Absurd** (Beckett, Pinter's early "comedies of menace") and later the **political theatre** of the 1970s (Edward Bond, David Hare, Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill) followed. Feminist companies and women dramatists brought new subjects and forms.

The four prescribed plays trace this whole history: Irish folk tragedy (1904), German Epic Theatre (1941), English post-war realism (1956) and feminist experimental theatre (1982).

### Development of Poetry, 1851–1957

Victorian poetry extended Romantic lyricism into new forms: the dramatic monologue, the long narrative or philosophical poem, the elegiac sequence and the experimental sonnet. Its music was often rich and regular (Tennyson, Swinburne), though Browning and Hopkins roughened it towards speech rhythms. In the 1890s Aestheticism and Symbolism refined poetry towards pure suggestion. The **Georgian poets** (about 1912–1922) wrote pastoral, traditional verse; the **war poets** (Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg) confronted the horrors of the trenches. The Modernists (Pound, Eliot, the later Yeats) broke with regular form and developed free verse, fragmentation and the mythic method. The **Thirties poets** (Auden and his circle) brought politics and colloquial wit into poetry. After 1945, the **Movement** poets (Larkin, Amis, Davie, Enright) returned to plain statement, formal control and ironic understatement, while Hughes and others reacted against them with a poetry of violence, myth and instinct.

## POETRY

### MATTHEW ARNOLD

#### Life and Background

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) was the eldest son of Dr Thomas Arnold, the reforming headmaster of Rugby School, whose ideals of moral earnestness and Christian manliness shaped Victorian public-school education. Matthew was educated at Rugby and at Balliol College, Oxford, and was elected a Fellow of Oriel College in 1845. At Oxford he formed a close friendship with the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, whose later death in 1861 Arnold mourned in the pastoral elegy "Thyrsis" (published 1866; collected 1867).

In 1851 Arnold married Frances Lucy Wightman and, to secure an income, became one of Her Majesty's **Inspectors of Schools**, a post he held until 1886. The work involved tiring travel through England and gave

him direct knowledge of middle-class and working-class education. He also reported on education in France, Germany and other European countries. From 1857 to 1867 he was **Professor of Poetry at Oxford**, the first to lecture in English rather than Latin. Out of these lectures came *On Translating Homer* (1861) and, later, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867).

#### Arnold as Poet

Most of Arnold's significant poetry was written before about 1867. His volumes include *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849), *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* (1852), *Poems* (1853), *Poems, Second Series* (1855), *Merope* (1858) and *New Poems* (1867). In the Preface to *Poems* (1853) he explained why he had withdrawn *Empedocles* on Etna: a situation in which suffering finds no vent in action, in which there is everything to be endured and nothing to be done, is not a proper subject for poetry. He argued that poets should choose great actions, as the Greeks did, rather than morbid states of mind.

The paradox of Arnold's poetry is that his best poems are exactly the kind he warned against: reflective, melancholy, inward and uncertain. "Dover Beach", "The Scholar-Gypsy", "Thyrsis", "The Buried Life", "To Marguerite — Continued", "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" and "Rugby Chapel" all explore isolation, doubt and the loss of spiritual certainty. In "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1855) he describes himself as wandering between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born. That image summarises the historical position that his poetry explores.

#### Arnold as Critic

From the 1860s Arnold turned increasingly to criticism. The major works are:

- ▶ *Essays in Criticism* (First Series, 1865), which opens with "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time". Here he defines criticism as a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.
- ▶ *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), which defines culture as the pursuit of perfection and uses the phrase "sweetness and light" (borrowed from Swift's *The Battle of the Books*). It classifies the English classes as Barbarians, Philistines and Populace and contrasts the Hebraic emphasis on conduct with the Hellenic emphasis on seeing things as they really are.
- ▶ *Literature and Dogma* (1873), which reinterprets the Bible as literature, describing God as "the Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness".
- ▶ *Essays in Criticism* (Second Series, 1888), which includes "The Study of Poetry" (first published in 1880) and essays on Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Gray and others.

Arnold's critical vocabulary — criticism of life, high seriousness, touchstones, disinterestedness, culture, Philistinism, the grand style — became part of the language of English criticism. T. S. Eliot, who

both admired and criticised him, is his most important twentieth-century successor.

### Major Themes of Arnold's Poetry

**Faith and doubt.** Arnold experienced the loss of orthodox faith not as liberation but as deprivation. His poetry mourns what has gone and seeks substitutes: human love, culture, poetry itself.

**Isolation.** In "To Marguerite — Continued" human beings are islands separated by the "unplumbed, salt, estranging sea". The individual cannot fully reach another person.

**The "buried life".** Beneath the surface self lies a deeper true self that is rarely reached. Only in rare moments of love does the hidden stream of life become audible.

**Modern restlessness.** Arnold diagnoses modern life as hurried, divided and purposeless. "The Scholar-Gypsy" is the fullest statement of this theme.

**Nature.** Nature for Arnold is beautiful, calming and often associated with Wordsworth, but it no longer reveals a divine meaning. It offers refuge rather than revelation.

**Classical influence.** Arnold admired Greek poetry for its clarity, proportion and seriousness. Sophocles appears in "Dover Beach"; Empedocles gives his name to a verse drama; "Thyrsis" and "The Scholar-Gypsy" use the pastoral tradition of Theocritus and Virgil.

### Style and Technique

Arnold's poetic style is measured, clear and often elegiac. He avoids the verbal richness of Tennyson and the colloquial roughness of Browning. He frequently uses irregular line lengths and free rhyme (as in "Dover Beach") or elaborate stanza forms modelled on Keats's odes (as in "The Scholar-Gypsy"). His images are few but carefully developed, especially images of the sea, rivers, light and darkness. His characteristic tone is one of quiet regret.

### Contribution and Significance

Arnold holds a double position in English literature. As a poet he gave the most memorable expression to the Victorian crisis of faith and the modern sense of alienation. As a critic he established the idea of literature as a central force in national culture, able to shape moral and emotional life when religion was weakening. This idea influenced the teaching of English literature in schools and universities in Britain and throughout the Empire, including India.

For the examination, keep the two roles distinct but connected: the poet who mourns lost faith in "Dover Beach" is the same thinker who, in "The Study of Poetry", proposes that poetry will increasingly take the place of religion.

### "Dover Beach"

#### Background and Publication

"Dover Beach" was published in *New Poems* (1867). Scholarly opinion generally holds that it was drafted

much earlier, probably around 1851, the year of Arnold's marriage, when he and his wife visited Dover on their honeymoon journey to the Continent. The exact date of composition is not certain, so it is best described as composed probably around 1851 and published in 1867.

The dating matters because the poem is often associated with Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). In fact the poem's doubt predates Darwin. It reflects the broader impact of geology, biblical criticism and rationalism in the 1840s and 1850s.

### Title and Setting

Dover, on the south-east coast of England, faces France across the narrowest part of the English Channel. Its white chalk cliffs are a national symbol. The setting is precise: a calm night, a full tide, moonlight on the straits, the French coast where a light gleams and vanishes, and the English cliffs standing glimmering. The speaker stands at a window and calls his companion to join him and listen.

The title is simple and local, but the poem moves from this specific beach to the whole of human history: from Dover to the Aegean, from the present night to Sophocles, from the tide to the "Sea of Faith", and finally to a dark plain of battle.

### Form and Structure

"Dover Beach" consists of 37 lines divided into four verse paragraphs of unequal length (14, 6, 8 and 9 lines). The lines vary in length from short lines of two or three stresses to full pentameters. Rhyme is present throughout but follows no fixed scheme. This irregularity is significant. The poem does not impose a stable form on its material; its rhythm rises and falls like the waves it describes. Many critics see it as an early step towards the freer forms of modern poetry.

The first paragraph has fourteen lines and has sometimes been described as a loose, broken sonnet. The poem's movement can be summarised as follows:

1. **Stanza 1:** the present scene, beautiful and calm, then the sound of the pebbles introducing "the eternal note of sadness".
2. **Stanza 2:** the same sound heard long ago by Sophocles on the Aegean, who associated it with human misery.
3. **Stanza 3:** the Sea of Faith, once full, now heard only in its "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar".
4. **Stanza 4:** the appeal to love, and the vision of the world as a darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night.

### Detailed Explanation

**Stanza one.** The poem opens with a series of calm statements: the sea is calm, the tide is full, the moon lies fair upon the straits. Everything suggests fullness and stability. The speaker invites his companion to the window to enjoy the sweet night air. Then the tone changes with a single word of attention: "Listen!" The sense of hearing takes over from sight. The speaker hears the grating

roar of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling up the high strand. The movement of the pebbles begins, ceases and begins again, with a tremulous cadence slow, bringing in "the eternal note of sadness".

This is the poem's central technique: a natural sound is gradually transformed into a meaning. What begins as description becomes a symbol of human sorrow.

**Stanza two.** The speaker reaches back into the classical past. Sophocles long ago heard this same sound on the Aegean, and it brought into his mind the turbid ebb and flow of human misery. The reference is probably to a chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone* comparing the curse on a house to a swelling sea, although Arnold does not name a specific passage. The point is that sadness is not new; it is a permanent part of human experience. The speaker and his contemporaries find in the same sound a thought of their own, heard by this distant northern sea.

**Stanza three.** The central metaphor appears. The Sea of Faith was once at the full, lying round earth's shore like the folds of a bright girdle furled. The image suggests that religious faith once encircled and held together the world, as a belt holds clothing. Now the speaker only hears its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, retreating to the breath of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear and naked shingles of the world.

The tide of the opening scene was full; now faith is ebbing. The long vowels and repeated sounds of this stanza imitate the slow withdrawal of the water and leave the reader with an image of bare, exposed pebbles. The world without faith is naked and dreary.

**Stanza four.** The speaker turns to his companion: "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!" Personal fidelity is offered as the only remaining value. The world, which seems to lie before us like a land of dreams, so various, so beautiful, so new, actually has neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain. This list is a series of negations that strips away every comfort. The poem closes with its most famous image: we are here as on a darkling plain, swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night.

The final image is widely traced to Thucydides' account of the night battle of Epipolae during the Athenian expedition to Sicily, in which soldiers in darkness could not distinguish friend from enemy. Arnold's friend Clough had used the same episode in his poem *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*. The image suggests a world of conflict without understanding: people fight without knowing why or against whom.

#### Pattern of Movement: From Landscape to Isolation

The poem's thought moves in a clear sequence that is worth remembering: **natural landscape** → **sound** → **historical consciousness** → **religious doubt** → **human isolation**.

- The *landscape* is calm and beautiful.
- The *sound* of the pebbles introduces sadness.
- *Historical consciousness* connects that sadness to Sophocles and the whole human past.

- *Religious doubt* is expressed through the Sea of Faith.
- *Human isolation* is answered only by the fragile bond between two lovers in a dark and violent world.

#### Themes

**Loss of religious certainty.** The poem is the classic statement of the Victorian crisis of faith. It does not argue against religion; it mourns its disappearance.

**Human misery.** Sadness is presented as eternal, heard by Sophocles as much as by the speaker.

**Love and human relationship.** In the absence of faith, personal loyalty becomes the one remaining value. Some readers find this touching; others find it despairing, since love is invoked not as joy but as a shelter.

**Appearance and reality.** The world "seems" beautiful and new but has no true light or peace. The poem shows the contrast between the beautiful surface of the night and the sadness beneath it.

**Modern alienation.** The final image of confused armies anticipates twentieth-century literature of isolation and meaningless conflict.

#### Imagery, Sound and Symbolism

**Sea imagery** carries the poem. The full tide at the beginning and the ebbing Sea of Faith later create an ironic pattern: fullness in nature, withdrawal in the spirit.

**Light and darkness.** The poem begins in moonlight and a gleaming light on the French coast; it ends on a darkling plain. The movement from light to dark mirrors the movement from calm to despair.

**Sound.** "Dover Beach" is a poem of hearing. The grating roar, the tremulous cadence, the withdrawing roar and the confused alarms form an aural sequence. Alliteration and long vowels create the effect of waves.

**Symbolism.** The sea symbolises faith; the pebbles suggest human beings rolled helplessly by forces they do not control; the darkling plain symbolises the modern world.

#### Tone

The tone moves from quiet admiration, through gentle melancholy, into elegiac sadness and finally to urgent, almost desperate appeal. The poem never becomes violent in expression; its despair is controlled.

#### Critical Interpretations

**As the voice of Victorian doubt.** Most traditional readings treat the poem as a representative statement of its age. Its classic status in anthologies rests largely on this.

**As a proto-Modernist poem.** Its free form, its picture of a world without certitude and its final image of meaningless war have led critics to see it as a forerunner of twentieth-century poetry.

**As a love poem.** Some critics stress the dramatic situation: a man speaking to a woman at a window. On this reading, the poem asks whether love can be enough. The answer remains open.

**Critical parody.** Anthony Hecht's poem "The Dover Bitch" (1960s) imagines the scene from the silent woman's point of view, humorously questioning the speaker's gloom. This parody is a reminder that the listener never speaks in the original poem.

### Significance

"Dover Beach" is one of the most anthologised poems in English. Its reputation rests on its combination of exact description, symbolic depth, historical range and emotional honesty. In literary history it is the key poem of Victorian religious doubt and a bridge towards Modernist alienation.

### "The Scholar-Gypsy"

#### Source and Background

"The Scholar-Gypsy" was published in *Poems* (1853). Its source is a story told by Joseph Glanvill in *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661). Glanvill describes a poor Oxford scholar who, lacking the means to continue his studies, left the university and joined a band of gypsies. Years later, two former fellow-students met him, and he told them that the gypsies possessed a traditional knowledge by which they could influence the minds of others through the power of imagination, and that he intended, when he had fully learned this art, to reveal it to the world.

Arnold's poem takes this old anecdote and transforms the scholar into an immortal figure who still wanders the countryside around Oxford, waiting for the "spark from heaven" that will reveal the secret knowledge.

#### Form

The poem consists of **25 stanzas of ten lines each**. The stanza is modelled on the stanza of Keats's odes, particularly the "Ode to a Nightingale". Each stanza uses iambic pentameter except for the sixth line, which is shorter (three feet). The rhyme scheme is usually given as abcbcadeed. The Keatsian form is appropriate because the poem shares Keats's longing for escape from a world of change, fever and fret into a timeless beauty.

The poem is often described as a **pastoral** poem, and more specifically as a meditative pastoral with narrative elements. It uses the conventions of pastoral: shepherds, fields, flowers, a rural setting and a contrast with the corrupt world.

#### Structure and Detailed Explanation

The poem can be divided into four broad movements.

**Stanzas 1–3: The pastoral setting and the poet's invitation.** The poem opens by addressing a shepherd, telling him to go and untie the wattled cotes (sheepfolds) and later return to continue the quest. The poet lies in a high field corner in the summer, with the book of Glanvill beside him, looking down on Oxford's towers. The pastoral setting is rich with detail of the Oxford countryside.

**Stanzas 4–13: The story of the Scholar-Gypsy and his appearances.** The poet retells Glanvill's story and then imagines the scholar's continued presence in the landscape. Country people have seen him at the ferry on

the Thames near Bablock-hithe, at the Fyfield elm, in the Cumnor hills, by Godstow bridge and on the causeway near Hinksey. Maidens dancing around the Fyfield elm in May have seen him; mowers bathing in the river have seen him; a student has seen him in winter crossing the wooden bridge. He is shy, pensive, always silent, always escaping when approached. He waits for the spark from heaven to fall.

**Stanzas 14–23: The contrast with modern life.** The poet suddenly recalls that two hundred years have passed since Glanvill wrote. Surely the scholar is dead and buried. Then he corrects himself: the scholar has not died, because he has not lived the modern life that wears men out. Modern men are exhausted by repeated shocks and many changes; they have "sick hurry" and "divided aims". The scholar, by contrast, has one aim, one business, one desire. The poem's most famous phrase describes "this strange disease of modern life".

The poet then urges the scholar to flee from contact with modern men, as Dido turned away from Aeneas in the underworld, lest he catch their infection of doubt and restlessness.

**Stanzas 24–25: The Tyrian trader simile.** The poem ends with an extended simile. A grave Tyrian trader, seeing the merry Grecian coaster (a ship of the young, upstart Greek traders) enter his familiar waters, shakes out his sails and sails away westward, beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, to the Atlantic coast where dark Iberians come to trade. The simile compares the scholar's flight from modern life to the ancient Phoenician trader's withdrawal from the new Greek commercial world. Critics have long debated the meaning of this ending. The dominant reading is that the older, more serious civilisation withdraws from a brash new one to preserve its integrity.

#### Themes

**Escape from modern life.** The Scholar-Gypsy is valuable precisely because he has withdrawn from society. The poem does not suggest that the poet or the reader can follow him; it only holds him up as an ideal.

**Permanence and change.** The Oxford countryside, beloved and detailed, appears both timeless and slowly changing. The scholar's immortality is the immortality of an idea that is not subject to change.

**Victorian restlessness.** The poem's diagnosis of modern life — hurry, divided aims, repeated disappointment, partial faith, half-lived lives — is Arnold's most complete statement of the modern malaise.

**Faith and waiting.** The scholar waits for the spark from heaven. He has faith of a sort — faith in a future revelation — which modern men lack. The poem sets his single purpose against their fragmented doubt.

**Nature.** The countryside is described with exact topographical detail and loving affection. Nature is a refuge, a space of calm contemplation, although it does not itself provide the answer.

- **Humility topos:** the poet professes inability to praise adequately — itself a form of praise.

### Place in the Sequence

Sonnet 106 follows 105 ("Let not my love be called idolatry"), which claims that the beloved unites the three qualities of fair, kind and true. Sonnet 106 continues the theme of the beloved as an ideal beyond description, while Sonnet 107 ("Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul") returns to prophecy and asserts once more that the speaker's poem will be the beloved's monument.

### Form, Diction and Allusion

The diction of the first quatrain is deliberately archaic and chivalric — "wights", "old rhyme", "ladies dead and lovely knights" — evoking the world of medieval romance and of Spenser. The second quatrain's catalogue ("Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow") imitates the blazon it describes, listing features in a rhythmic series. The third quatrain introduces a theological vocabulary ("prophecies", "prefiguring", "divining eyes") that transforms literary history into a kind of sacred history in which the beloved is the fulfilment. The couplet's balanced antithesis — "eyes to wonder" against "tongues to praise" — gives the poem its graceful conclusion: the modern poets can see perfectly well, but cannot speak adequately.

### Critical Interpretation

The sonnet's argument turns the usual boast of poetic immortality upside down. Rather than claiming his verse will make the beloved eternal, the speaker admits poetry's inadequacy. Yet this is a sophisticated hyperbole: the beloved's beauty is so great that no poetry, past or present, can express it. Some critics note the religious language, which lends the beloved an almost sacred status.

### Sonnet 116 — "Let me not to the marriage of true minds"

#### Context

Sonnet 116 is the most famous definition of ideal love in English poetry and is often read at weddings. It belongs, by position, to the Fair Youth group, but the poem itself is general and addresses no one directly.

#### Structure and Explanation

**Quatrain 1: love does not change.** "Let me not to the marriage of true minds / Admit impediments." The phrase echoes the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer, where the congregation is asked to declare any impediment to the marriage. The "marriage of true minds" is a union of spirits, not merely of bodies. Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove — it does not change when the beloved changes, nor withdraw when the beloved withdraws.

**Quatrain 2: love as a fixed guide.** "O no, it is an ever-fixed mark / That looks on tempests and is never shaken".

Love is like a sea-mark (a lighthouse or beacon) that faces storms unmoved. It is **the star to every wandering bark** (ship), whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. The star is the Pole Star, by which sailors navigate; its altitude can be measured, but its true value or nature cannot be known.

**Quatrain 3: love and time.** "Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks / Within his bending sickle's compass come". Love is not the plaything of Time, although physical beauty falls within the sweep of Time's curved sickle. Love alters not with Time's brief hours and weeks, but **bears it out even to the edge of doom** — endures to the Day of Judgement.

**Couplet: the challenge.** "If this be error and upon me proved, / I never writ, nor no man ever loved." If this definition is wrong, then the speaker never wrote and no man ever loved — which is obviously false, so the definition must be true.

#### Themes

Ideal love; constancy; change; time; the relation between love and time; love's endurance; love as a guide.

#### Imagery and Figures of Speech

- **Marriage imagery:** the Prayer Book's language of impediments.
- **Storm and navigation imagery:** tempests, the ever-fixed mark, the star, the wandering bark.
- **Personification of Time:** as the Grim Reaper with a bending sickle.
- **Metaphor:** love as a mark and a star.
- **Hyperbole:** love lasts to the edge of doom.
- **Negative definition:** love is defined partly by what it is not ("Love is not love which...", "Love's not Time's fool").
- **Wordplay:** "alters ... alteration", "remover to remove".

#### Structure

The first quatrain states what love is not; the second what love is; the third returns to love's resistance to time; the couplet stakes the speaker's credibility. The couplet functions as a logical and rhetorical guarantee.

#### Place in the Sequence

Sonnet 116 occurs among sonnets (roughly 109–120) in which the speaker confesses his own wanderings and infidelities and defends his love as nevertheless constant. Sonnet 117 asks the beloved to accuse him of neglect, and Sonnet 119 describes how "ruined love, when it is built anew" grows fairer than at first. Read in this context, Sonnet 116 may be an ideal set against the speaker's own failures, which gives its confident tone a note of self-persuasion.

#### Metre and Sound

The sonnet's metre is strongly regular, which suits its theme of steadfastness. Its most memorable lines are built on firm monosyllables ("an ever-fixed mark", "Love's not

Time's fool"). The repetition of words with slight changes (alters/alteration, remover/remove, bends/bending) enacts the changes that love refuses to follow. The long vowels in "looks on tempests and is never shaken" give an effect of stability. The couplet's double negative ("I never writ, nor no man ever loved") was grammatically normal for emphasis in Elizabethan English.

### Critical Interpretations

The sonnet is usually read as a noble affirmation of constant love. Some critics, however, observe its defensive tone and its negative constructions, suggesting that it is written against a background of actual change, doubt or betrayal — the speaker insists on love's constancy precisely because he fears its alteration. Placed within the sequence, where the young man and the speaker are sometimes unfaithful, the sonnet may be an idealisation rather than a description. The couplet's logic has been called both triumphant and slightly desperate.

### Important Points

- ▶ Echo of the Book of Common Prayer ("impediments").
- ▶ "Ever-fixed mark"; "star to every wandering bark".
- ▶ "Love's not Time's fool".
- ▶ "Edge of doom": Judgement Day.
- ▶ Couplet: "If this be error and upon me proved, / I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

## Sonnet 129 — "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame"

### Context

Sonnet 129 belongs to the Dark Lady sequence, but it addresses no one; it is a general meditation on **lust**. It is one of the most intense and technically violent of the sonnets.

### Structure and Explanation

**Quatrain 1: lust defined.** "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame / Is lust in action". The "expense of spirit" means the expenditure of vital energy (and, in Renaissance physiology, of semen); "a waste of shame" is a shameful squandering, with a pun on "waist" and a suggestion of a desolate wasteland. Till action, lust is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame, savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust. The accumulating adjectives express lust's violence.

**Quatrain 2: before and after.** Lust is enjoyed no sooner but despised straight; hunted past reason, and no sooner had, hated past reason, like a swallowed bait laid on purpose to make the taker mad.

**Quatrain 3: the three stages.** Lust is mad in pursuit and in possession; had, having and in quest to have, extreme; a bliss in proof (while being experienced), and proved (afterwards), a very woe; before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.

**Couplet: universal knowledge and helplessness.** "All this the world well knows; yet none knows well / To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell."

### Themes

Sexual desire; lust; desire before and after fulfilment; psychological conflict; shame; the moral dimension of desire; the gap between knowledge and action.

### Technique

- ▶ **Paradox:** bliss and woe, heaven and hell.
- ▶ **Antithesis:** before and after, joy and dream, hunted and hated.
- ▶ **Repetition and polyptoton** (the same word in different forms): "had, having and in quest to have"; "proof ... proved"; "knows ... knows".
- ▶ **Accumulation (asyndeton):** the list of adjectives without conjunctions.
- ▶ **Violent imagery:** murderous, bloody, savage; the swallowed bait.
- ▶ **Rhythm:** harsh, irregular stresses and heavy caesuras enact the violence of the subject.
- ▶ **Chiasmus** in the couplet's play on "knows well" and "well knows".

### Place in the Sequence

Sonnet 129 stands between the playful 128 (in which the speaker envies the keys of the virginal his mistress plays) and the witty 130. Its impersonal, tormented analysis of lust interrupts the Dark Lady sonnets with a moment of general self-condemnation, and anticipates the darker poems of betrayal and disease later in the group (144, 147).

### The Sound of Lust

Sonnet 129 is one of the most metrically turbulent of the sonnets. The fourth line — a list of five adjectives separated by commas — breaks the smooth iambic movement into staccato stresses. The heavy alliteration (perjured, murderous; savage, extreme) and harsh consonants make the poem sound as violent as its subject. The sestet's repetitions ("had, having, and in quest to have") imitate the circular, obsessive movement of desire. By contrast, the couplet is smooth and proverbial, as though the speaker steps back to state a universal truth that he knows he cannot himself obey. The movement from frenzied rhythm to calm aphorism mirrors the gap between knowledge and action that is the poem's theme.

### Moral Dimension and Critical Interpretations

The sonnet presents lust as a trap: people know its consequences but cannot avoid it. It has been read as a Christian moral statement, as a psychological analysis of compulsion, and as a moment of self-disgust within the Dark Lady sequence. Its impersonality — no "I" or "you" — gives it the force of a universal pronouncement. Some critics see satire of the Petrarchan idealisation of desire; others see a tragic vision of human nature. Robert Graves and Laura Riding's essay on this sonnet (in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927) was an early example of close reading of its original punctuation.

## Sonnet 130 — "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"

### Context

Sonnet 130 belongs to the Dark Lady sequence. It is the best-known **anti-Petrarchan** sonnet in English: it parodies the conventional catalogue of the beloved's beauties.

### Petrarchan Conventions and the Blazon

Petrarchan poets compared the beloved's eyes to the sun or stars, lips to coral, skin to snow, cheeks to roses, hair to golden wire, breath to perfume, voice to music, and her gait to that of a goddess. A **blazon** is a descriptive catalogue of a woman's body parts, praised one by one. Sonnet 130 is an **anti-blazon**: it applies the same catalogue but denies each comparison.

### Structure and Explanation

**Quatrain 1.** My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; coral is far more red than her lips' red; if snow be white, why then her breasts are dun (greyish-brown); if hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

**Quatrain 2.** He has seen roses damasked (variegated), red and white, but no such roses in her cheeks; and in some perfumes is there more delight than in the breath that from his mistress **reeks** (in Elizabethan English, "reeks" meant simply "is exhaled", though the modern sense of stink adds comic force).

**Quatrain 3.** He loves to hear her speak, yet well knows that music hath a far more pleasing sound; he grants he never saw a goddess go (walk); his mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

**Couplet.** "And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare / As any she belied with false compare." His love is as precious as any woman misrepresented by false comparisons.

### Themes

Love; beauty; the relationship between truth and poetic convention; realism; the critique of flattery.

### Technique

- ▶ **Irony and parody** of Petrarchan hyperbole.
- ▶ **Anti-blazon.**
- ▶ **Negative comparisons** (litotes and understatement).
- ▶ **The volta in the couplet:** "And yet" turns mockery into sincere praise.
- ▶ **Realism:** the beloved is an ordinary woman who walks on the ground.
- ▶ **Hyperbole** is rejected, but the couplet contains its own affirmation.

### Place in the Sequence

Sonnet 130 develops the argument of Sonnet 127, which declared that black is now beauty's heir. Unlike most Dark Lady sonnets, 130 is affectionate and good-humoured. The later sonnets of the group (137–152)

become increasingly bitter, presenting the mistress as unfaithful and the speaker's desire as a sickness. Sonnet 130 is therefore the lightest moment in a darkening sequence.

### Form and Tone

The first twelve lines consist of a sequence of plain, negative comparisons, many of them organised as neat if-then structures ("If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; / If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head"). The language is deliberately unpoetic: "dun", "wires", "reeks", "treads on the ground". The tone is ironic but not contemptuous. The volta comes only at the couplet, with "And yet, by heaven", a solemn oath that marks the shift from parody to affirmation. The final word "compare" (comparison) names exactly the rhetorical device the poem has been mocking. The poem is therefore not a rejection of love poetry but a redefinition of it: true praise must be truthful.

### Critical Interpretations

The poem is usually read as a witty, affectionate celebration of real love over conventional flattery — the true lover praises the beloved honestly. Some critics find it more ambivalent, reading the comparisons as genuinely unflattering, consistent with the Dark Lady sequence's mixture of desire and disparagement. Others read it chiefly as literary satire aimed at other sonneteers. Its final effect is to suggest that truthfulness in poetry is itself a form of devotion.

### Important Points

- ▶ Anti-Petrarchan sonnet; anti-blazon.
- ▶ Dark Lady sequence.
- ▶ Key images: sun, coral, snow, black wires, damasked roses, perfume, music, goddess.
- ▶ Couplet: love "as rare / As any she belied with false compare".

## COMPARATIVE STUDY

### Comparative Study of the Four Plays

#### Shared Period, Different Visions

The four prescribed plays were written within about eight years (c. 1603–1611), for the same company (the King's Men), under the same monarch (James I). They share many concerns — power, authority, deception, justice, the relation of fathers and children, the gap between appearance and reality — but they treat them in different dramatic modes. *Othello* and *King Lear* move towards catastrophe; *Measure for Measure* moves towards a troubled comic resolution; *The Tempest* moves through threatened tragedy to reconciliation. Read in order of composition, they suggest a movement in Shakespeare's work from the tragic exposure of human evil towards the attempt, in the late plays, to contain evil through forgiveness and art.

**Master Comparison**

| Feature                | Othello                                              | King Lear                                                | The Tempest                                   | Measure for Measure                                          |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date (approx.)         | 1603–04                                              | 1605–06                                                  | 1610–11                                       | 1603–04                                                      |
| Genre                  | Tragedy (domestic)                                   | Tragedy (cosmic, political)                              | Romance / tragicomedy                         | Problem play / dark comedy                                   |
| Setting                | Venice; Cyprus                                       | Ancient Britain: palaces, the heath, Dover               | A remote island                               | Vienna                                                       |
| Central conflict       | Trust against manufactured jealousy                  | Authority and love against ingratitude and ambition      | Vengeance against forgiveness                 | Law against mercy; desire against principle                  |
| Main protagonist       | Othello                                              | Lear                                                     | Prospero                                      | Isabella / the Duke (shared focus with Angelo)               |
| Principal antagonist   | Iago                                                 | Goneril, Regan, Edmund                                   | Antonio (and Sebastian); Caliban's plot       | Angelo                                                       |
| Love                   | Romantic marriage destroyed                          | Filial love tested, false love exposed                   | Young love fulfilled under a father's control | Sexual desire regulated; forced marriages                    |
| Power                  | Military authority; Iago's manipulative power        | Royal power surrendered and seized                       | Prospero's magical power; usurpation          | Delegated judicial power abused                              |
| Justice                | Othello's false "justice" in killing                 | Divine and human justice questioned                      | Judgement followed by pardon                  | Justice versus mercy explicitly debated                      |
| Appearance and reality | "Honest" Iago; seemingly guilty Desdemona            | Flattering daughters; disguised Kent and Edgar           | Illusions of storm, banquet and masque        | Angelo's false virtue; the disguised Duke; the bed-trick     |
| Disguise and deception | Iago's deceptions                                    | Kent as Caius; Edgar as Poor Tom; Edmund's forged letter | Ariel invisible; Prospero's illusions         | Duke as Friar Lodowick; Mariana in the dark; Ragozine's head |
| Supernatural           | The handkerchief's legend; accusations of witchcraft | Invoked gods who never answer; Poor Tom's devils         | Central: magic, spirits, masque goddesses     | Absent (religious rather than supernatural)                  |
| Ending                 | Murder and suicide                                   | Deaths of Lear and Cordelia                              | Forgiveness, marriage, return to Milan        | Pardon, marriages, silence                                   |

**Fathers and Daughters**

All four plays involve relationships between fathers (or father figures) and daughters or young women. **Brabantio** loses Desdemona to a marriage he opposes, and dies of grief. **Lear** misjudges his daughters, disinherits the loving one, and is destroyed by the others. **Prospero** controls Miranda's education and marriage, turning her future into a means of political reconciliation. In *Measure for Measure*, the **Duke** acts as a father-figure who arranges the young women's destinies, including a proposal to Isabella. The comparison reveals a spectrum from tragic loss (Brabantio, Lear) to benevolent but controlling authority (Prospero, the Duke).

**Villains and Tempters**

**Iago** and **Edmund** are both Machiavellian villains who speak candidly to the audience in soliloquy, use forged or false evidence (the handkerchief, the letter), and destroy trusting victims. Iago is more mysterious; Edmund's motives (illegitimacy, ambition) are clearer. **Antonio** is a political usurper who remains unrepentant. **Angelo** is a different case: not a villain by nature but a moralist whose repressed desire corrupts him. The progression from Iago's motiveless malignity to Angelo's self-discovery shows Shakespeare's range in exploring evil.

woman is brought down by an experienced old man, and in which the play sides with tradition. Another treats it as evidence of the play's ambiguity about male power, since Sidi is deceived and the outcome favours the manipulator. A third reading notes that Sidi, at the end, appears to accept her situation in a way that gives her a certain dignity and a role in the palace. A fourth reading places the comedy within Yoruba traditions of trickster narrative, in which cunning wins the day, and does not interpret it as a moral endorsement. A balanced answer should state that the ending is open to several interpretations.

### Performance Elements

Soyinka makes full use of theatrical resources. The village scenes involve dance and song, and the dumb show of the "lost traveller", in which villagers act out the coming of the photographer, is a set piece of mime. The music and drumming punctuate the action. The contrast of registers is important: Lakunle's inflated English, Sadiku's colloquial speech, Baroka's more measured tones, and the verse and song in which the villagers express themselves. In performance, the play is lively and physical, with an emphasis on the collective life of the village.

### George Ryga — *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*

#### Author and context

George Ryga (1932–1987) was a Canadian dramatist and novelist, born in Alberta to Ukrainian immigrant parents. He was known for socially critical drama. *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* premiered at the Vancouver Playhouse in 1967, Canada's centennial year, and it confronted the audience with the treatment of Indigenous peoples in a nation celebrating its history. Ryga was not himself Indigenous, and this is relevant to critical discussion of the play.

The historical background includes the **Indian Act (1876)**, which controlled the lives of First Nations people, the system of **residential schools** that took children from their families, and the movement of Indigenous people from reserves to cities, where they faced poverty and discrimination.

#### The play

The play centres on **Rita Joe**, a young Indigenous woman who has left her reserve for the city. It is set largely in a **courtroom**, where she appears before a Magistrate on a minor charge. The action is not chronological. Scenes of the court alternate with memories and dreamlike sequences of Rita's past: her life on the reserve, her father **David Joe**, her sister, her early experience of school, and her relationship with **Jaimie Paul**, an Indigenous man who loves her and is also defeated by the city. Figures of authority (the Magistrate, a Priest, a Teacher, policemen) speak for the institutions that have shaped her life. Songs and choral passages are woven through.

Rita struggles to keep her identity, and the institutions press her to conform. Rita and those close to her are

ultimately destroyed by violence, and the play ends in tragedy. (Details of the closing events should be checked against the prescribed edition.)

#### Themes

**Indigenous identity and cultural loss.** Rita is caught between two worlds and has lost the support of the community's traditions.

**Colonial displacement and urbanisation.** The movement to the city is presented as the result of a long history of dispossession.

**Racism and institutional power.** The court and the social agencies do not understand her, and their language and rules are alien.

**Poverty.** Economic hardship makes her vulnerable.

**Memory and community.** The past is present in her mind, and her people's voices haunt the play.

#### Dramatic technique

The play is **expressionist**. Its structure is fragmented, and it uses **dream sequences, songs, choral effects and a flexible stage** to render Rita's inner world. The **courtroom** is used as a frame, in which the legal form is contrasted with human suffering. Symbolic use of light and of the figure of the Magistrate makes the state visible. The play's music, including songs sung by the Indigenous characters, gives a sense of a living culture.

#### Critical interpretations

The play was influential in bringing Indigenous issues to the Canadian stage. Later critics, while acknowledging this, have raised questions about representation: an outsider writes about Indigenous suffering, and Rita is largely presented as a victim. The rise of Indigenous playwrights in Canada has changed the context in which it is read. A good answer states both its importance and the debate on authorship and voice.

#### The Structure of the Play

The play has no conventional plot. It is organised around the figure of Rita, and around a sequence of scenes in the courtroom and in her memory. The Magistrate presides, and figures from her past, such as her father David Joe, her sister Eileen, and the priest, appear to bear witness or to speak for institutions. Jaimie Paul, her lover, moves in and out of the scenes. The play uses songs, choral passages and mime to open up the internal life of the characters. This fragmented structure is designed to convey the disorientation of a person caught in a system that does not understand her. Since the play does not follow a linear story, a student should be ready to describe its method and not just its subject.

#### The Courtroom and the Language of Power

The courtroom is a setting in which Rita is the object of judgement, and the language of the law is contrasted with her own speech. The Magistrate and the officials use formal language and legal categories. Rita speaks simply, and she is often unable to explain herself in the terms that the court demands. The play thus dramatises a

conflict between two ways of speaking, and, by extension, between two ways of understanding the world. The court cannot see her as a person, only as a case. This is one of the play's clearest statements about the relationship between institutions and the Indigenous individual.

### Indigenous Characters and the Question of Representation

The play shows Indigenous characters who preserve aspects of a distinct culture: David Joe's memory of the land, the songs, and the sense of community. It also shows the erosion of this culture. The critical debate has centred on the fact that the playwright was not Indigenous. Supporters argue that Ryga used his position as an outsider with sympathy to bring attention to an issue that was ignored, and that the play was among the first in Canada to give Indigenous experience such prominence. Critics argue that it presents Indigenous people mainly as victims, and that it gave them little voice of their own. The subsequent flourishing of Indigenous drama in Canada has enabled a more complex conversation. In an answer, the student should present the debate and avoid a simple verdict.

### The Title

The title combines the name of a woman, Rita Joe, with the word "ecstasy", which suggests a state of exalted feeling. The word can be read ironically, since the play's action is one of suffering. It can also suggest a spiritual dimension: an experience that goes beyond suffering into an intensity of being. Rita's songs and her attachment to her culture provide moments of such intensity. The tension between the word and the events is part of the play's meaning.

### Jane Harrison — *Stolen*

#### Author and context

Jane Harrison (born 1960) is an Aboriginal Australian writer and playwright, of the Muruwari people. *Stolen* was first performed in 1998 by the Indigenous theatre company Ilbjerri and published in 2000 (dates to be confirmed against the prescribed edition). It is one of the best-known Australian plays about the **Stolen Generations**.

#### Historical background

From the nineteenth century until the 1970s, government and church authorities in Australia removed many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and placed them in institutions or with white families. The policies were justified by the aims of protection and assimilation. The **National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families** produced the report *Bringing Them Home* in 1997. It documented the scale and effects of the removals, and it led to the establishment of **National Sorry Day** (26 May). In **February 2008** the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivered a formal apology in the Australian Parliament. Because this is a subject of factual record, statements about it in the textbook should follow these official sources.

### The play

*Stolen* presents the stories of a small group of Aboriginal children who grow up in a children's home. The characters are played by a small cast, and their stories are told through scenes in the home and later scenes that show the consequences of separation in their adult lives. The characters have different fates. Some try to find their families, some are destroyed by loneliness and institutional life, and some struggle with identity and belonging. (The names and details of the individual characters should be taken from the prescribed edition.)

The play does not follow one central plot. It is built from **multiple narratives**, and it draws on testimony from people who were removed.

### Themes

**Forced separation and family.** The loss of mother and family is the wound at the centre.

**Identity and cultural displacement.** The children are stripped of language, name and kin.

**Trauma and memory.** The effects of removal continue into adult life. The play shows the way that trauma is carried.

**Institutionalisation.** The home is a place of discipline, emotional deprivation and, in some cases, abuse.

**Reconciliation.** The play ends with recognition and an assertion of survival and community, rather than with easy closure.

**Indigenous voice.** Aboriginal actors and an Aboriginal author tell the story from within.

### Dramatic technique

- **Documentary and testimonial elements.** The play uses the form of testimony, and it draws on real accounts.
- **Multiple narratives and a small cast.** Actors move between characters, which suggests the shared nature of the experience.
- **Simple stagecraft.** A sparse set, and the use of movement and direct address, focus attention on the stories.
- **Restraint.** The play avoids melodrama, and its power derives from accumulation of detail.

### Critical perspectives

Critics have discussed *Stolen* as **testimonial theatre** and as an example of Indigenous Australian drama that contributes to public memory and to the debate on reconciliation. The play has been widely performed and taught. A careful reader distinguishes between the play's fiction and the historical record it draws on.

### The Practice of Removal and Its Justifications

To understand the play, a student should know the nature of the policies that it deals with. From the late nineteenth century, state laws in the Australian colonies and later states gave authorities powers over Aboriginal people, including the power to remove children. Officials argued that children of mixed descent would be better

off if they were brought up among white people, and that this would help them to assimilate. The children were placed in missions, dormitories and homes, or with white families, often without their parents' consent. The result was the separation of families, the loss of language and connection to country, and, in many cases, poor treatment. The report *Bringing Them Home* (1997) recorded these experiences from testimony and concluded that the policies had caused lasting harm. The report's findings are one of the historical bases of the play. It should be remembered that a play is not a substitute for the historical record: it presents a dramatic interpretation of experience.

### Testimony and Theatre

The play's use of testimony is important. Testimony is a form of speech in which a person who has experienced an event tells it in the first person, and in doing so establishes a claim on the listener's attention. By staging characters who tell their stories, the play converts private memory into a public act. The audience becomes a witness. The theatrical form also makes it possible to show the emotional effect of the stories, which written testimony can sometimes hide. The play's use of a small cast, the doubling of roles, and the direct address to the audience reinforce this quality of witnessing.

### Memory, Identity and Home

The play's central emotional concern is the loss of home. The children are taken from their mothers, and the play follows them into adult life, where they find it hard to form relationships or to know who they are. The search for family, and for the knowledge of one's own origins, drives much of the action. The idea of home appears as a place of belonging that has been destroyed, and that the characters try to recover. The play does not offer a simple restoration. Some of the characters find a partial reunion, and some do not. This restraint is part of its honesty.

### Reception and Significance

The play has been widely performed in Australia and abroad, and it has been used in schools and community education. It is often discussed as part of the movement toward reconciliation, and as an example of Indigenous playwrights taking control of their own stories. Its style, which is simple and unsentimental, has made it accessible to audiences who may not know the history. The continuing debates about the apology, compensation and recognition give the play an enduring relevance. Any claims about the effects of the play on public opinion should be made cautiously, since they are difficult to prove.

## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIAN AND COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE

Comparison in this chapter is analytical. It compares how texts treat shared questions, and it does not rank them.

### Colonialism and its aftermath

The prescribed texts approach colonialism in different ways. *Things Fall Apart* looks at the encounter of an African society with missionaries and the colonial state, and it shows the loss of self-government and the reordering of belief. *Cry, the Beloved Country* shows the social damage of a racial order in which land and labour were controlled by others. Voss looks at colonial exploration from within the settler culture and questions the myth of the heroic explorer. *Stolen* and *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* look at the human cost of settler-colonial policies on Indigenous families. In Indian writing, *The God of Small Things* shows how the colonial past lives on in the Anglophile habits and the hierarchies of a Kerala family, and Bhatt's "A Different History" treats the language of colonisation itself. King's essay stands apart, since it argues against making colonisation the central category for Indigenous literature.

A useful contrast follows from Chapter 7: Achebe and Roy write from societies where the colonial power eventually left, while Ryga, Harrison and King write from settler states where the colonial structure remains.

### Caste, class and social hierarchy

Ambedkar provides the analytic framework: caste is a system of graded inequality supported by religious sanction. Anand and Markandaya show how class and caste act on labour and hunger. Roy shows how caste governs love and law. Paton and Achebe are not concerned with caste, but they show comparable systems of hierarchy: race and class in South Africa, and title and gender in Igbo society. The comparison shows that the texts share an interest in how a social order distributes dignity and power, and that the mechanisms differ.

### Indigenous identity

Kath Walker, Judith Wright, Thomas King, George Ryga and Jane Harrison deal with Indigenous peoples in settler states, though from very different positions. Walker speaks as an Indigenous poet to her community. Wright speaks as a settler descendant conscious of dispossession. King, an Indigenous critic, argues about categories. Ryga, a non-Indigenous dramatist, shows an Indigenous woman's fate. Harrison, an Indigenous playwright, uses testimony. The question of **who speaks** is itself a subject of critical debate in this group.

### Gender

Kamala Das claims a woman's voice; Tendulkar exposes the double standard; Mahasweta Devi shows the survival of a poor woman; Dattani examines the pressures on masculinity; Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* shows a comedy in which a woman's choices are entangled with male trickery; Harrison and Wright include women's experience in histories of dispossession. A useful contrast is between texts that give women a first-person voice (Das) and texts that show women within social systems (Tendulkar, Mahasweta, Soyinka).

## Language and identity

Ezekiel treats Indian English as an object of art; Kamala Das claims English as her own; Bhatt shows language as historically implicated in power; Soyinka shows language as an instrument of prejudice; Achebe shows the use of proverb to carry Igbo speech into English; King shows the power of terminology. Together they show that the language issue for postcolonial writers is not only whether to use English but how, and with what awareness of its history.

## Tradition and modernity

*Hayavadana* draws on folk theatre to examine a modern crisis of identity. *Dance Like a Man* shows a classical art in conflict with modern gender expectations. *The Lion and the Jewel* satirises Westernised pretension and cunning tradition. *Things Fall Apart* shows a tradition's strengths and rigidity in the face of change. In none of these is the resolution a simple choice of one side.

## Literary form

The prescribed texts show a range of formal strategies. Confessional free verse (Das) is set beside the classical stanza (Toru Dutt and Hope), and the prose-poem (Tagore) beside the bush ballad (Paterson). In fiction, the linear realism of Anand and Achebe is set beside the fragmented time of Roy and the symbolic modernism of White. In drama, the folk theatre of Karnad, the expressionism of Ryga, the realism of Tendulkar and Dattani, the comedy of Soyinka and the testimony of Harrison reflect the diversity of postcolonial theatre.

## Indian and Commonwealth writing compared

Both bodies of writing emerge from British colonial rule and both must negotiate the use of English. Indian writing in English is unusual in the size of its regional-language context: many of its writers work also in other languages, and much of its drama is translated. Commonwealth writing in this unit spans invaded colonies (Nigeria, Sierra Leone), settler colonies (Australia, Canada) and a segregated colonial society (South Africa), so that Indigenous dispossession and racial hierarchy are more central. The common ground lies in the effort to speak for a community, to remember a suppressed history, and to reshape the language of the coloniser.

## Selected Pairings

The following pairings are suitable for developed comparison. Each rests on documented similarities and differences.

**Tagore and Walker: hope and address.** Both poets address an audience with a note of consolation and encouragement. Tagore's poems of freedom and of trust in God have a spiritual and universal dimension. Walker's poem is specific: it addresses an oppressed people and looks for a change in their condition. The contrast lies between a devotional and a political register, though Tagore's poem 35 also has a political dimension.

**Ezekiel and Soyinka: language as social comedy.** Both poets use the speech of a particular social setting to make

comedy that carries a serious meaning. Ezekiel gives the voice of an Indian English speaker who is unaware of his effect. Soyinka gives the voice of an African speaker who is aware and in control. Ezekiel's satire is gentle and internal to the community; Soyinka's is directed at an external prejudice. Both show the use of a dramatic monologue to expose social attitudes.

**Kamala Das and Judith Wright: the woman poet and the land or self.** Both are women poets who write from a strong sense of personal experience. Das concentrates on the self and the body; Wright on the land and history. Das's confessional mode contrasts with Wright's meditative, reflective one. Both, however, reflect on belonging and identity.

**Toru Dutt and A. D. Hope: the adaptation of English forms.** Both use formal English verse, Dutt in the octaves of "Our Casuarina Tree" and Hope in the disciplined stanzas of "Australia". Dutt uses form to sanctify an Indian tree; Hope uses it to satirise a colonial society. The comparison shows the same tradition put to different uses.

**Anand and Paton: the novel of social conscience.** Both novels expose social injustice with compassion. Anand's is a novel of class and labour in colonial India; Paton's is a novel of race, land and family in South Africa. Anand uses a picaresque form and a panoramic view; Paton uses a lyrical, biblical prose and a structure of alternating chapters. Both end in a death (Munoo's, Absalom's) and both hold out limited hope.

**Roy and Achebe: the novel of the community in crisis.** Both novels concern a community at a moment of upheaval and show a tragic fall. Achebe's is linear, and Roy's is fragmented. Achebe writes from within the precolonial and colonial encounter; Roy writes of a postcolonial society in which colonial and caste hierarchies still operate. Both are concerned with the use of English to carry a local idiom.

**Karnad and Soyinka: theatre drawing on tradition.** Both dramatists use traditional performance forms (Yakshagana; Yoruba song, dance and mime) and combine them with modern dramatic concerns. Karnad reworks a myth to explore identity; Soyinka writes a comedy to explore the clash of tradition and modernity. Both use narrators or set pieces that acknowledge the audience.

**Tendulkar and Dattani: the middle-class family and society.** Both plays expose the workings of social conformity in the urban middle class. Tendulkar concentrates on a single evening and a collective act of cruelty; Dattani on the history of a family. Both are concerned with gender.

**Mahasweta Devi and Jane Harrison: testimony and marginal voices.** Both bring the experience of marginalised communities to the stage: low-caste women in one case, Aboriginal children in the other. Both use elements of documentary or testimony. The difference is that Harrison writes as a member of the community she portrays, while Mahasweta was a middle-class writer working with communities to which she was allied.

**Matrix Language Frame model** (1993) describes the grammar of intra-sentential switching, in which one language (the matrix language) provides the grammatical frame.

### Code-mixing

**Code-mixing** is the use of words, phrases or morphemes from one language **within the grammatical structure of another**, usually within a single sentence or clause. Tamil–English mixing (popularly **Tanglish**) and Hindi–English mixing (**Hinglish**) are common Indian examples:

- ▶ *Naan office-ku late-aa pōnen.* ('I went to the office late.')
- ▶ *Bus-la seat kidaikkala.* ('I didn't get a seat on the bus.')

Here the English nouns and adverbs take Tamil case suffixes and fit into Tamil grammar.

| Code-switching                                                        | Code-mixing                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alternation between languages, often across sentences or larger units | Insertion of elements of one language into another, usually within a sentence |
| Each stretch keeps its own grammar                                    | The host (matrix) language usually supplies the grammar                       |
| Often has a discourse function (quotation, emphasis, change of topic) | Often reflects habitual bilingual usage                                       |

**Caution:** many linguists use "code-switching" as a cover term for both phenomena, and the boundary between them is debated. In TRB questions, the distinction **between-sentence alternation (switching) versus within-sentence insertion (mixing)** is the safe answer.

### Diglossia

**Diglossia** is a situation in which **two distinct varieties of the same language** are used in a community for **different functions**: a **High (H)** variety for formal, written and prestigious purposes, and a **Low (L)** variety for everyday conversation.

The concept was introduced into English by **Charles A. Ferguson** in his article "**Diglossia**" (1959), in the journal *Word*. His four classic examples were:

| Language     | High variety                            | Low variety                                                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arabic       | Classical/<br>Modern<br>Standard Arabic | local colloquial Arabic                                                       |
| Swiss German | Standard German                         | Swiss German dialects                                                         |
| Haiti        | French                                  | Haitian Creole (Ferguson's example involves two related varieties in contact) |
| Greek        | Katharévousa (then)                     | Dhimotikí                                                                     |

Features of diglossia according to Ferguson: **function** (H for sermons, lectures, news, poetry; L for conversation, instructions to servants, folk literature), **prestige** (H is considered superior), **literary heritage** (in H), **acquisition** (L is acquired at home; H is learned at school), **standardisation** (H is codified), **stability** (the situation can last for centuries), and differences in **grammar, lexicon and phonology**.

**Tamil** is a well-known example of diglossia: the **literary** variety (*centamiḷ*, 'refined Tamil') is used in writing, formal speeches and news broadcasts, while the **spoken** variety (*koṭuntamiḷ*, colloquial Tamil) is used in everyday conversation. The two differ in pronunciation, verb endings and vocabulary (literary *avarkaḷ vantārkaḷ* versus colloquial *avañka vantāñka*, 'they came').

**Joshua Fishman** (1967) extended the concept: he applied diglossia to situations involving **two different languages** used for H and L functions (for example, Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay), and distinguished diglossia (a social arrangement) from **bilingualism** (an individual ability).

## GRAMMAR AND TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

### The Meaning of Grammar

The word **grammar** is used in several senses, and confusing them causes many errors in examinations.

- ▶ **Grammar as the system of a language:** the set of rules and patterns that speakers know, mostly unconsciously, which allows them to form and understand sentences. In this sense every native speaker "knows" the grammar of their language, even if they have never studied a grammar book.
- ▶ **Grammar as a description** of that system: a book or theory that sets out the rules, such as *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (Quirk et al., 1985).
- ▶ **Grammar as a set of rules of "correct" usage:** the prescriptive sense, as in "His grammar is bad."
- ▶ **Grammar as a level of linguistic structure:** in the narrow sense, grammar covers **morphology** (word structure) and **syntax** (sentence structure). In the wider sense used by Chomsky, a grammar includes phonology and semantics as well.

### Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammar

| Descriptive grammar                                   | Prescriptive grammar                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Describes how people <b>actually</b> use the language | Prescribes how people <b>should</b> use the language |
| Based on observation of real usage                    | Based on norms, tradition, logic, Latin or taste     |
| Non-judgemental: all varieties are systematic         | Judgemental: forms are "correct" or "incorrect"      |
| Attitude of the <b>scientist</b>                      | Attitude of the <b>legislator</b> or <b>teacher</b>  |

| Descriptive grammar                                                 | Prescriptive grammar                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Example statement: "Many speakers end sentences with prepositions." | Example rule: "Never end a sentence with a preposition." |
| Modern linguistics                                                  | Eighteenth-century English grammarians, style manuals    |

A related term is **proscriptive**: a rule that **forbids** a form ("Do not split infinitives").

Linguistics is descriptive. However, **pedagogical grammar** (grammar written for learners) necessarily selects a standard and gives guidance; this is not the same as condemning other varieties.

### Traditional Grammar: History

**Traditional grammar** is the body of grammatical description inherited from the ancient Greeks and Romans, developed in medieval Europe, and applied to English from the sixteenth century onward. It is the grammar of the familiar school textbook: parts of speech, sentence parsing and analysis, rules of correctness.

#### The Classical Tradition

- ▶ **Plato** (4th century BC) distinguished *ónoma* (roughly, noun or subject) and *rhêma* (roughly, verb or predicate).
- ▶ **Aristotle** added *syndesmoi* (connecting words) and discussed tense.

- ▶ The **Stoic** philosophers developed the categories of case and tense further.

- ▶ **Dionysius Thrax** (c. 170–90 BC), in the *Téchnē Grammatiké* ('Art of Grammar'), the earliest surviving Greek grammar (its authorship and date are debated), set out **eight parts of speech**: noun, verb, participle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb and conjunction.

- ▶ **Varro** (116–27 BC) wrote *De Lingua Latina* on Latin.

- ▶ **Aelius Donatus** (4th century AD), whose *Ars Minor* was a standard school text throughout the Middle Ages, and **Priscian** (c. AD 500), author of the *Institutiones Grammaticae*, adapted the Greek system to Latin. Since Latin has no article, the **interjection** was added to keep the number at eight.

- ▶ The medieval **Modistae** ("speculative grammarians") tried to relate grammatical categories to modes of being and understanding.

**Parallel traditions**: Indian grammatical thought is much older in some respects. **Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī** (c. 5th–4th century BC), a grammar of Sanskrit in about 4,000 compact rules (*sūtras*), is admired by modern linguists for its rigour and generative, rule-ordered character. For Tamil, the *Tolkāppiyam* is the earliest extant grammar (its date is debated; it is commonly placed in the early centuries BC or AD), and **Nannūl** (13th century, Pavaṇanti) became the standard school grammar.

### Traditional Grammar of English

| Grammarians              | Work                                                        | Date               | Significance                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| William Bullokar         | <i>Pamphlet for Grammar</i>                                 | 1586               | Earliest printed grammar of English; closely modelled on Latin                                                                                               |
| Ben Jonson               | <i>The English Grammar</i>                                  | published 1640     | Literary author's grammar                                                                                                                                    |
| John Wallis              | <i>Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae</i> (in Latin)             | 1653               | Tried to describe English on its own terms; <i>shall/will</i> rule                                                                                           |
| Joseph Priestley         | <i>The Rudiments of English Grammar</i>                     | 1761               | Relatively descriptive; respected usage                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Robert Lowth</b>      | <b><i>A Short Introduction to English Grammar</i></b>       | <b>1762</b>        | Most influential prescriptive grammar; ruled that two negatives make an affirmative; discouraged (without forbidding) the preposition at the end of a clause |
| <b>Lindley Murray</b>    | <b><i>English Grammar</i></b>                               | <b>1795</b>        | Based largely on Lowth; enormously successful school text in Britain and America                                                                             |
| Henry Sweet              | <i>A New English Grammar, Logical and Historical</i>        | 1891–1898          | Scholarly traditional grammar with a descriptive attitude                                                                                                    |
| Otto Jespersen           | <i>A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles</i>    | 1909–1949 (7 vols) | Monumental descriptive grammar based on literary citations                                                                                                   |
| J. C. Nesfield           | <i>English Grammar Past and Present</i> and school grammars | 1898 onward        | Widely used in India                                                                                                                                         |
| P. C. Wren and H. Martin | <i>High School English Grammar and Composition</i>          | 1935 onward        | The classic Indian school grammar                                                                                                                            |

The **eighteenth century** was the great age of **prescriptivism**. Grammarians wished to “ascertain” (fix) and “improve” English, often measuring it against Latin. Well-known prescriptive rules include:

- ❑ Do not end a sentence with a preposition. (John Dryden criticised Ben Jonson for this construction in 1672; the rule was later repeated by grammarians.)
- ❑ Two negatives make a positive; *I don't know nothing* is illogical. (Lowth.)
- ❑ Say *It is I*, not *It is me*, because the verb *be* takes the same case after it as before it (the Latin rule).
- ❑ Do not split an infinitive (*to boldly go*). This rule became popular only in the **nineteenth century**.
- ❑ Use *shall* with *I/we* and *will* with other persons for simple future (the Wallis tradition).

Scholars such as **Sweet** and **Jespersen** belong to the “scholarly traditional” or “descriptive traditional” line: they used the traditional categories but based their descriptions on real usage.

## The Main Concepts of Traditional Grammar

### Parts of Speech

Traditional grammar classifies English words into **eight parts of speech**, largely following the Latin model:

| Part of speech      | Traditional (notional) definition                                           | Examples                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Noun</b>         | the name of a person, place or thing                                        | <i>Ravi, Chennai, book, kindness</i> |
| <b>Pronoun</b>      | a word used instead of a noun                                               | <i>he, it, they, who</i>             |
| <b>Adjective</b>    | a word that qualifies (describes) a noun                                    | <i>tall, red, three</i>              |
| <b>Verb</b>         | a word that expresses an action or state                                    | <i>run, is, seem</i>                 |
| <b>Adverb</b>       | a word that modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb                 | <i>quickly, very, here</i>           |
| <b>Preposition</b>  | a word placed before a noun or pronoun to show its relation to another word | <i>in, on, by, with</i>              |
| <b>Conjunction</b>  | a word that joins words or sentences                                        | <i>and, but, because</i>             |
| <b>Interjection</b> | a word expressing sudden feeling                                            | <i>oh, alas, hurrah</i>              |

Many school grammars treat the **articles** (*a, an, the*) as a kind of adjective (demonstrative adjectives or determiners).

### Classification of Sentences

**By function (meaning):**

| Type                    | Function          | Example                    |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Declarative (assertive) | makes a statement | <i>The train has left.</i> |

| Type          | Function                   | Example                         |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Interrogative | asks a question            | <i>Has the train left?</i>      |
| Imperative    | gives a command or request | <i>Catch the train.</i>         |
| Exclamatory   | expresses strong feeling   | <i>What a fast train it is!</i> |

Some school grammars add **optative** sentences, which express a wish (*May you live long!*).

**By structure:**

| Type                    | Structure                                                       | Example                                                |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Simple</b>           | one independent (main) clause                                   | <i>She sang a song.</i>                                |
| <b>Compound</b>         | two or more independent clauses joined by coordination          | <i>She sang and he danced.</i>                         |
| <b>Complex</b>          | one main clause and one or more dependent (subordinate) clauses | <i>She sang when he arrived.</i>                       |
| <b>Compound-complex</b> | at least two main clauses and at least one dependent clause     | <i>She sang when he arrived, and everyone clapped.</i> |

### Subject and Predicate

Traditional grammar divides the sentence into two parts:

- ❑ The **subject**: the person or thing about which something is said.
- ❑ The **predicate**: what is said about the subject.  
*The old gardener | watered the roses every evening.* (subject | predicate)

This analysis goes back to the logical tradition of Aristotle (subject and predicate of a proposition). Traditional grammar also identifies the **object** (direct and indirect), the **complement** (subject complement: *She is a doctor*; object complement: *They elected him captain*) and **adjuncts** (adverbial modifiers).

### Phrase and Clause

- ❑ A **phrase** is a group of words that forms a unit but **does not contain a finite verb with its subject**: *in the morning, the tall building, running fast*. School grammar identifies noun phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases by their function.
- ❑ A **clause** is a group of words that contains a **subject** and a **finite verb** and forms part of a sentence.
  - **Main (independent, principal) clause**: can stand alone.
  - **Subordinate (dependent) clause**: cannot stand alone. Traditional grammar classifies subordinate clauses by function into **noun clauses** (*I know **that** he is honest*), **adjective (relative) clauses** (*the boy who won the prize*) and **adverb clauses** (*I left **because** it was late*).

**Note:** in modern linguistics a “phrase” is defined by its **head** (noun phrase = headed by a noun, and so on), and a single word can form a phrase; the traditional definition is narrower.

### Agreement (Concord)

**Agreement** or **concord** is the relationship in which the form of one word depends on another. In English:

- ▶ **Subject–verb agreement** in number and person: *The boy plays; The boys play.*
- ▶ **Pronoun–antecedent agreement:** *Every girl brought her book.*
- ▶ **Determiner–noun agreement:** *this book / these books.*

Special problems include collective nouns (*The team is/are ready*: British English allows both), the “proximity” principle (*Neither the teacher nor the students were present*) and notional agreement (*Ten kilometres is a long way*).

### Case

**Case** is the grammatical category that shows the **function of a noun or pronoun** in a sentence by its form. Latin had six cases; Old English had four (Chapter 3). In Modern English:

- ▶ **Nouns** show only the **genitive (possessive)** case: *the boy's book, the boys' books*. The traditional “nominative” and “objective” cases of nouns are identical in form.
- ▶ **Personal pronouns** keep three forms: **subjective (nominative)** *I, he, she, we, they*; **objective (accusative)** *me, him, her, us, them*; **possessive (genitive)** *my/mine, his, her/hers*.
- ▶ *who/whom/whose* also show case, though *whom* is declining.

Traditional school grammars sometimes list a “vocative” case and a “dative” case for English nouns by imitation of Latin; since English nouns have no special forms for these functions, linguists regard this as an example of **Latin bias**.

### Tense

Traditional school grammars teach **twelve tenses**: present, past and future, each in simple, continuous (progressive), perfect and perfect continuous forms.

Modern linguists point out that English has only **two tenses** marked by the **form of the verb itself**: **present** (*walk/walks*) and **past** (*walked*). The other distinctions are expressed by:

- ▶ **Aspect: progressive** (*be + -ing*) and **perfect** (*have + past participle*).
- ▶ **Modal auxiliaries**: the “future” is expressed by *will/shall, be going to*, the present progressive (*I am leaving tomorrow*) or the simple present (*The train leaves at six*).

Tense (grammatical form) must also be distinguished from **time** (real-world past, present, future): *If I had money now* uses a past tense form for present hypothetical meaning.

### Voice

**Voice** shows the relationship between the subject and the action of the verb.

- ▶ **Active voice**: the subject is the **doer** (agent): *The police arrested the thief.*
- ▶ **Passive voice**: the subject is the **receiver** of the action: *The thief was arrested (by the police).*

The English passive is formed with *be + past participle*; the agent is optional and is introduced by *by*. The **get-passive** (*He got arrested*) is common in informal English. Only **transitive** verbs usually have passives. The passive is used when the agent is unknown, unimportant or obvious, or to keep the topic in subject position; it is frequent in **scientific and official registers**.

### Mood

**Mood** shows the **speaker's attitude** to what is said: whether it is presented as fact, command, wish or possibility.

| Mood               | Use                                                      | Example                                                                    |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Indicative</b>  | statements of fact and questions                         | <i>He works hard.</i>                                                      |
| <b>Imperative</b>  | commands, requests, instructions                         | <i>Work hard.</i>                                                          |
| <b>Subjunctive</b> | wishes, hypotheses, demands, conditions contrary to fact | <i>If I were you...; I insist that he leave at once; God save the King</i> |

The English subjunctive survives in a few forms: the “**were-subjunctive**” (*if I were*), the **mandative subjunctive** (*It is essential that she be present*, more common in American English), and **formulaic** expressions (*Long live the Queen, Be that as it may*). Much of the work of mood is done in Modern English by **modal verbs** (*may, might, should, would*); this is called **modality**.

### Parsing and Analysis

Two classic school exercises of traditional grammar are:

- ▶ **Parsing**: describing each word of a sentence by its part of speech and grammatical features (for example, “*boys*: common noun, masculine gender, plural number, nominative case, subject of *play*”).
- ▶ **Analysis** (clause analysis): dividing a sentence into its clauses and their parts (subject, predicate, object, extension, and so on), and identifying the type and function of each clause.

### Strengths of Traditional Grammar

- ▶ It provides a **long-established, familiar framework** and terminology (noun, verb, clause, tense) that is still used in schools, dictionaries and modern linguistics.
- ▶ It gives useful **practical guidance** for writing formal, standard English.
- ▶ It has a strong interest in **meaning**: definitions are notional and relate grammar to thought.
- ▶ It gives attention to the **written, literary language**, which is important in education.

## The Indefinite Article: A and An

### Meaning and Uses

A/an developed historically from the Old English numeral *ān* ("one"). It is used only with **singular countable nouns**. Its uses are:

- ▶ **First mention** of something not yet known to the listener: *I saw a snake in the garden.* (Second mention: *The snake was green.*)
- ▶ **One of a class**, with no particular one in mind: *Please bring me a chair. She wants to buy a car.*
- ▶ **Classification or profession** after *be* and *become*: *She is a doctor. He became an engineer.* (✗ *She is doctor*; this omission is common in Indian English but is non-standard.)
- ▶ **Generic reference** (any member representing the class): *A dog is a faithful animal.*
- ▶ **The meaning "one"** with numbers and measures: *a hundred, a thousand, a dozen, a kilo, a week.*
- ▶ **Rates and frequency** ("per"): *₹60 a kilo; twice a day; 80 kilometres an hour.*
- ▶ **Exclamations with what and such** before singular countable nouns: *What a beautiful day! She is such a kind person.* (Not with uncountable nouns: ✗ *What a lovely weather!* → ✓ *What lovely weather!*)
- ▶ **Certain expressions of quantity**: *a few, a little, a lot of, a great deal of, a number of, a couple of.*
- ▶ **With quite, rather and half** (word order): *quite a good film; rather a long way* (also *a rather long way*); *half an hour* (also *a half-hour*, especially in AmE).
- ▶ **Before a proper noun meaning "a person called" or "someone like"**: *A Mr Sharma called for you. He is a Tagore in the making.*

### A versus An: Sound, Not Spelling

The choice between *a* and *an* depends on the **first sound** of the following word, **not on its first letter**:

- ▶ *a* is used before a **consonant sound**;
- ▶ *an* is used before a **vowel sound**.

**Vowel letters with consonant sounds (use a).** The letter *u* is often pronounced /ju:/ or /jʊ/, which begins with the consonant sound /j/; the letter *o* is pronounced /w/ in *one* and *once*; the letter *e* is pronounced /j/ in *Europe*, *euphemism*:

*a university, a unit, a uniform, a union, a useful book, a unique idea, a European, a eulogy, a ewe, a one-rupee coin, a one-way street, a once-famous actor, a U-turn, a UNESCO project* (ju:-/)

**Consonant letters with vowel sounds (use an).** A silent *h* leaves a vowel as the first sound; and the letter names of *f, h, l, m, n, r, s, x* begin with vowel sounds (/ef/, /ertʃ/, /el/, /em/, /en/, /ɑ:/, /es/, /eks/):

*an hour, an honest man, an heir, an honour, an honorary degree, an MLA, an MBA, an FIR, an SOS, an X-ray, an LED bulb, an NGO, an RTI application, an 8-year-old boy, an 11th-century temple*

**Letters and abbreviations.** When an abbreviation is read letter by letter (an **initialism**), the article follows the sound of the first letter: an *MP* (/em pi:/), a *BA degree* (/bi:/), an *IAS officer*, a *UN report* (/ju:/). When an abbreviation is read as a word (an **acronym**), the article follows the sound of that word: a *NATO summit* (/ˈneɪtəʊ/), a *UNICEF programme* (/ˈjuːnɪsef/), an *AIDS campaign* (/eɪdz/).

**Words beginning with a pronounced h.** When *h* is pronounced, *a* is used: *a house, a hotel, a historian, a hospital, a hero*. With *historic, hotel* and a few similar words where the first syllable is unstressed, *an* was formerly common and is still used by some British speakers (*an historic occasion*). In current standard usage, *a historic* and *a hotel* are normal, and *a* is the safer choice in examinations.

**The same word can take different articles according to pronunciation of the modifier.** The article agrees with the word that immediately follows it, not with the noun: *an apple* but *a red apple*; *a university* but *an old university*; *an hour* but *a full hour*.

## The Definite Article: The

### Meaning

*The* marks a noun phrase as **definite**: the speaker assumes that the listener can **identify** the particular thing or things referred to. *The* developed from the Old English demonstrative (*se, þæt*), and it retains a pointing function. It is used with singular and plural countable nouns and with uncountable nouns.

### Sources of Definiteness

The listener can identify the referent for one of several reasons:

- ▶ **Previous mention (anaphoric reference)**: *I bought a pen and a notebook. The pen is red.*
- ▶ **The situation (situational reference)**: *Please close the door. Pass the salt.* (the door or salt present in the situation)
- ▶ **Shared general knowledge (unique reference)**: *the sun, the moon, the earth, the sky, the world, the universe, the Internet, the Prime Minister* (of the country in question).
- ▶ **A defining post-modifier (cataphoric reference)**: *the book on the table; the man who called you; the history of Tamil Nadu.* (Compare *History is my favourite subject*, general, with zero article.)
- ▶ **Association (bridging reference)**: *I bought a car, but the engine was faulty.* (A car has an engine, so *the engine* is identifiable.)
- ▶ **Superlatives and ordinals, and only, same, next, last in a defining sense**: *the best student, the tallest building, the first chapter, the second prize, the only son, the same book, the last page.*

### Generic Uses of The

*The* + singular countable noun can refer to a **whole class**, especially in formal and scientific writing:

*The tiger is an endangered species. The computer has changed our lives. The lotus is the national flower of India.*

The + adjective refers to a **group of people**, and takes a plural verb:

the *poor*, the *rich*, the *blind*, the *elderly*, the *unemployed*, the *young*, the *dead*: The *rich* are *not* always happy.

The is also used with nationality adjectives ending in -*sh*, -*ch*, -*ese* to refer to the whole nation: the *English*, the *French*, the *Dutch*, the *Chinese*, the *Japanese*. (For others, the plural noun is used: the *Indians*, the *Americans*.)

### The with Proper Nouns and Place Names

Most proper nouns take **no article**, but certain categories take *the* by convention. These conventions are among the most frequently tested areas.

| Use the                                                                                                                                                                        | Use zero article                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rivers: <i>the Ganga, the Kaveri, the Nile, the Thames</i>                                                                                                                     | Lakes (single): <i>Lake Chilika, Lake Victoria</i>                                                                         |
| Seas and oceans: <i>the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific</i>                                                                                                         | Single mountains: <i>Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga, Doddabetta</i>                                                           |
| Mountain ranges: <i>the Himalayas, the Western Ghats, the Alps, the Nilgiris</i>                                                                                               | Continents: <i>Asia, Europe, Africa</i>                                                                                    |
| Groups of islands: <i>the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Maldives, the Philippines</i>                                                                                       | Single islands: <i>Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Rameswaram</i>                                                                   |
| Deserts: <i>the Thar, the Sahara</i>                                                                                                                                           | Most countries and states: <i>India, Tamil Nadu, France, Japan</i>                                                         |
| Canals and gulfs: <i>the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Mannar, the Bay of Bengal</i>                                                                                                 | Cities, towns, villages: <i>Chennai, Madurai, London</i>                                                                   |
| Countries with plural names or with Republic, Kingdom, States, Union: <i>the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Republic of India, the Czech Republic</i> | Streets and roads (mostly): <i>Anna Salai, Oxford Street, Mount Road</i> (but <i>the Mall, the High Street</i> in BrE)     |
| Newspapers: <i>The Hindu, The Times of India, The New Indian Express</i>                                                                                                       | Magazines (usually without <i>the</i> in running text unless part of the title)                                            |
| Famous buildings, monuments, hotels, cinemas, museums: <i>the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort, the Louvre, the Taj Coromandel</i>                                                      | Parks: <i>Hyde Park, Central Park</i> ; stations and airports named after places: <i>Chennai Central, Heathrow Airport</i> |
| Ships, trains and aircraft: <i>the Titanic, the Rajdhani Express</i>                                                                                                           | Universities and colleges named "X University": <i>Anna University, Madras University</i>                                  |

| Use the                                                                                                                                                            | Use zero article                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Institutions named "the X of Y": <i>the University of Madras, the Bank of India, the Indian Institute of Science</i>                                               | Religious festivals and days: <i>Diwali, Christmas, Pongal, Monday</i>      |
| Holy books and epics: <i>the Bible, the Quran, the Gita, the Ramayana, the Thirukkural</i>                                                                         | Languages: <i>English, Tamil, French</i> (but <i>the English language</i> ) |
| Historical periods and events: <i>the Renaissance, the Middle Ages, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Second World War</i>                     | Wars with numbers after the noun: <i>World War II</i>                       |
| Political bodies and parties: <i>the Parliament</i> (in many Indian contexts; BrE usually <i>Parliament</i> ), <i>the Lok Sabha, the Senate, the Supreme Court</i> | Personal names: <i>Ravi, Mrs Latha, Dr Kumar</i>                            |
| Points of the compass (as regions): <i>the North, the East</i>                                                                                                     | Compass directions as adverbs: <i>go north</i>                              |
| Musical instruments (when playing): <i>play the veena, the piano</i> (AmE also <i>play piano</i> )                                                                 | Games and sports: <i>play cricket, football, chess</i>                      |

Several details deserve attention:

- **Countries.** Most take no article, but those whose names contain a common noun (*Republic, Kingdom, States, Union, Emirates*) or are plural take *the*: *the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, the Philippines*. *The Gambia* and *the Bahamas* also take *the*. *The Sudan* and *the Ukraine* were formerly common but are now usually *Sudan* and *Ukraine*.
- **Mountains.** *Mount Everest* has no article, but *the Everest* is common in Indian English and should be avoided in formal writing. A few single peaks with foreign names take *the*: *the Matterhorn*.
- **Newspapers.** When *The* is part of the official title, it is capitalised (*The Hindu*); in running text some styles write *the Hindu*. In either case, the article is used.

### The with Musical Instruments, Inventions and Species

*The* is used with musical instruments when referring to playing them: *She plays the violin*. American English also allows the zero article (*She plays violin*). It is used with inventions considered as a class: *Who invented the telephone?* But no article is used with games and sports: *He plays cricket*. (X *plays the cricket*).

### The Zero Article

The **zero article** is used in the following cases.

1. **Plural countable and uncountable nouns in a general sense.**

Books are our best friends. Honesty is the best policy. Milk is good for health. Gold is a precious metal.

Compare with specific reference: The books on this shelf are mine. The milk in the fridge is sour. The gold of Kolar is famous.

**2. Abstract nouns used in a general sense.**

Love is blind. Knowledge is power. Education is the key to progress.

But when an abstract noun is particularised by a phrase or clause, *the* is used: The love of a mother is unconditional. The education I received was excellent. An abstract noun describing a particular instance takes *a*: She has a good knowledge of French. There was a silence.

**3. Material nouns (substances) in a general sense:** Iron is used to make steel. The chair is made of wood.

**4. Meals (in general):** We have breakfast at eight. What's for dinner? Lunch is ready. But *the* or *a* is used when the meal is specified or described: The dinner we had at the wedding was excellent. We had a delicious lunch.

**5. Languages and school subjects:** She speaks Tamil and English. He teaches History. (But the Tamil language, the history of India.)

**6. Diseases (most):** He is suffering from malaria, cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis. Some common ailments take *a*: a cold, a headache, a fever, a sore throat, a cough. A few traditionally take *the*: the flu, the measles, the mumps (the article is optional in current usage: He has flu / the flu).

**7. Institutions used for their primary purpose.** With school, college, university (chiefly BrE), church, temple, hospital (BrE), prison, jail, court, bed and work, no article is used when the reference is to the institution's normal function:

She goes to school (as a student). He was sent to prison (as a prisoner). She is in hospital (BrE, as a patient; AmE in the hospital). It's time for bed. He goes to church on Sundays.

When the building is referred to for some other purpose, *the* is used: Her father went to the school to meet the headmaster. The mason went to the prison to repair the wall.

**8. Means of transport with by:** by bus, by train, by car, by air, by sea, on foot. But: in the car, on the bus, take a taxi.

**9. Times of day and night, and seasons, after certain prepositions:** at night, at dawn, at noon, at midnight, by day, in spring (also in the spring).

**10. Days, months, festivals and years:** on Monday, in June, at Christmas, in 2025. (But the Monday before the exam, specific.)

**11. Titles followed by names, and titles used as complements:** President Murmu, Doctor Rao, Professor Kumar; They elected him chairman. She was appointed Principal. (A unique role as complement usually takes no article.)

**12. Fixed expressions and pairs:** from door to door, hand in hand, face to face, day after day, side by side, husband and wife, by mistake, in fact, at home, on time, at present.

**13. Headlines, notices, instructions and telegraphic style,** where articles are omitted for economy: Minister opens bridge; Push button.

**Special Areas of Article Use**

**Superlatives and Ordinals**

The superlative normally takes *the*: the best, the most beautiful. However:

- ▶ When *most* means "very", *a* or *zero* is used: It was a most interesting lecture (very interesting).
- ▶ When *most* means "the majority of", no article is used: Most people agree. (X The most people agree.)
- ▶ Predicative superlatives comparing the same thing in different conditions take no article: The lake is deepest here. She is happiest when she is painting.
- ▶ Ordinals normally take *the*: the first, the second. A second means "another": He made a second attempt.

**Historical References**

Historical periods, movements, events and dynasties take *the*: the Stone Age, the Mughal period, the Cholas, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Victorian Age, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Quit India Movement, the Battle of Plassey. Centuries and decades take *the* when they are the subject of reference: the nineteenth century, the 1990s.

**Common Nouns Used as Proper Nouns and Vice Versa**

When a unique title is used as a name, it may lose the article: Parliament is in session (BrE); Government has announced (common in Indian English; standard BrE and AmE use the Government). When a proper noun is qualified, it takes an article: the India of Gandhi's dreams; the young Tagore; This is not the Chennai I knew.

**Articles with Nouns of Measure, Price and Time**

*A/an* expresses "per": ₹80 a kilo. *The* is used in selling units: sold by the kilo, paid by the hour.

**Common Errors with Articles**

| Incorrect                       | Correct                     | Reason                                                      |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| He is honest man.               | He is an honest man.        | singular countable noun needs a determiner; silent <i>h</i> |
| She is a M.A. in English.       | She is an M.A. in English.  | <i>M</i> begins with a vowel sound /em/                     |
| He is an European.              | He is a European.           | /j/ is a consonant sound                                    |
| I read an useful book.          | I read a useful book.       | /j/ consonant sound                                         |
| The honesty is the best policy. | Honesty is the best policy. | abstract noun in general sense                              |

| Incorrect                                            | Correct                                            | Reason                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>He goes to the school every day. (as a pupil)</i> | <i>He goes to school every day.</i>                | institution for its purpose                           |
| <i>What a fine weather!</i>                          | <i>What fine weather!</i>                          | weather is uncountable                                |
| <i>He gave me an advice.</i>                         | <i>He gave me some advice / a piece of advice.</i> | advice is uncountable                                 |
| <i>She plays the chess.</i>                          | <i>She plays chess.</i>                            | games take zero article                               |
| <i>She plays violin. (BrE formal)</i>                | <i>She plays the violin.</i>                       | instruments take <i>the</i> (AmE allows zero)         |
| <i>Kaveri is a sacred river.</i>                     | <i>The Kaveri is a sacred river.</i>               | rivers take <i>the</i>                                |
| <i>The Mount Everest is the highest peak.</i>        | <i>Mount Everest is the highest peak.</i>          | single mountains: zero                                |
| <i>Himalayas are young mountains.</i>                | <i>The Himalayas are young mountains.</i>          | mountain ranges take <i>the</i>                       |
| <i>He is the best of the two.</i>                    | <i>He is the better of the two.</i>                | comparative for two                                   |
| <i>The most of the students passed.</i>              | <i>Most of the students passed.</i>                | <i>most</i> = majority: zero                          |
| <i>Sun rises in the east.</i>                        | <i>The sun rises in the east.</i>                  | unique reference                                      |
| <i>He came by the bus.</i>                           | <i>He came by bus.</i>                             | <i>by</i> + transport: zero                           |
| <i>I have a breakfast at 8.</i>                      | <i>I have breakfast at 8.</i>                      | meals in general: zero                                |
| <i>He is suffering from a fever and the malaria.</i> | <i>He is suffering from a fever and malaria.</i>   | <i>a fever</i> ; <i>malaria</i> zero                  |
| <i>The Tamil is a classical language.</i>            | <i>Tamil is a classical language.</i>              | languages: zero                                       |
| <i>A water is precious.</i>                          | <i>Water is precious.</i>                          | uncountable, general                                  |
| <i>Gita is a holy book.</i>                          | <i>The Gita is a holy book.</i>                    | holy books and epics take <i>the</i>                  |
| <i>The dinner is ready. (in general)</i>             | <i>Dinner is ready.</i>                            | meal in general                                       |
| <i>It is an unique opportunity.</i>                  | <i>It is a unique opportunity.</i>                 | /j/ consonant sound                                   |
| <i>He is one of the most intelligent student.</i>    | <i>He is one of the most intelligent students.</i> | <i>one of the</i> + plural (also a noun-number error) |

## Determiners: The Wider Class

### Classes of Determiners

| Class          | Members                                                                                                                           | Example                                  |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Articles       | <i>a, an, the</i>                                                                                                                 | <i>the book</i>                          |
| Demonstratives | <i>this, that, these, those</i>                                                                                                   | <i>those books</i>                       |
| Possessives    | <i>my, your, his, her, its, our, their</i> ; also possessive noun phrases ( <i>Ravi's</i> )                                       | <i>our house</i> ; <i>Ravi's car</i>     |
| Quantifiers    | <i>some, any, no, much, many, more, most, few, a few, little, a little, several, enough, all, both, half, a lot of, plenty of</i> | <i>many students</i>                     |
| Numbers        | cardinals <i>one, two, three</i> ; ordinals <i>first, second, last, next</i>                                                      | <i>three boys</i> ; <i>the first day</i> |
| Distributives  | <i>each, every, either, neither</i>                                                                                               | <i>each student</i>                      |
| Interrogatives | <i>which, what, whose</i>                                                                                                         | <i>Which book?</i>                       |
| Exclamatory    | <i>what, such</i>                                                                                                                 | <i>What a day!</i>                       |

### Position of Determiners

Determiners fall into three positions:

- ▶ **Pre-determiners:** *all, both, half, double, twice*, and fractions (*one-third*): *all the students*, *both my hands*, *half an hour*, *twice the price*.
- ▶ **Central determiners:** articles, demonstratives, possessives, *some, any, no, each, every, either, neither, which, what, whose*. **Only one central determiner** can normally be used: ✗ *the my book*, ✗ *this my friend* (common in Indian English as a direct translation, but non-standard); ✓ *this friend of mine*.
- ▶ **Post-determiners:** numbers and some quantifiers, which follow the central determiner: *the two boys*, *my first job*, *these few days*, *the many problems*.  
*all the three books* ✗ (normally *all three books* or *all the books*) — *both the boys* ✓ — *half the cake* ✓ — *my many friends* ✓

### Demonstratives

*This* (singular) and *these* (plural) refer to what is near the speaker in space or time; *that* (singular) and *those* (plural) refer to what is farther away. The demonstrative must agree in number with the noun: ✗ *this kind of books* is common but traditionally corrected to *this kind of book* or *these kinds of books*.

### Possessives

The possessive determiner agrees with the **possessor**, not with the thing possessed: *Ravi loves his mother*. *Sita loves her father*. *The tree lost its leaves*. (Many languages, including French, make the possessive agree with the