

The Lives of Great Men

Poem

<p>✧ Explain the issue and ask the students to discuss the qualities they feel are to be developed in order to achieve greatness.</p>	<p>Get Going</p>
<p>✧ This is a poem by Henry W Longfellow, a famous American poet. In it he explains the significance of learning about the lives of great men and women. The poem is written in three stanzas, and the rhyme scheme of each stanza is a b a b.</p>	<p>Read and Enjoy</p>
<p>✧ In the first stanza, the poet tells us that the lives of great men are an important lesson for us. When they live, they show us how 'we can make our lives sublime': that is how we can reach the heights of achievement, rising above the ordinary. And even after they die, they leave 'Footsteps on the sands of time'. He is comparing the passage of time to the sand. This serves a double symbolism. One is the passage of time we see when the sand in an hourglass keeps falling. The second is that sand, whether in a desert or on a beach is moving and any footprints on it are swept away either by the wind or by waves. Fame is, thus, shown to be very temporary. And yet famous men, men with high achievements leave us a legacy of their work and thoughts which serve as guideposts and beacons for us.</p>	
<p>✧ In the second stanza, the poet goes on to elaborate something about the 'footsteps'. As children we tend to follow the footsteps of older people whom we admire - maybe our parents, siblings, teachers, seniors, some celebrity, sportsperson, etc. The poet, continuing from 'footprints in the sands of time' says that these footsteps can inspire people who come to see them later. Someone, who is perhaps feeling 'forlorn', lonely and sad, because of some crisis or obstacle in his or her life, will feel a surge of hope and confidence seeing that someone else had faced a similar problem and overcome it. The poet describes the person facing the obstacle as 'a ship-wrecked brother' who is 'sailing over life's solemn main'. By calling the person a brother, the poet is emphasising our universal connectedness with each other. He calls the ocean the 'solemn main', a deep stretch of water, and compares life to it. The follower, seeing the achievement of the previous person, 'shall take heart again'. This means his hopes will rise again.</p>	

	<p>✧ In the last stanza, the poet encourages the reader to be 'up and doing'. He says we should not lose heart, not become fearful or depressed. We should, on the other hand, take action with a heart ready to face anything, 'with a heart for any fate'. We should continue making the effort to achieve, pursue our dream, persevere and wait patiently for our dream to come true. Nothing, he feels, will deter us from following the path we are following, in emulating the good qualities of those who have lived and achieved before us. This will definitely help us achieve our dream.</p>
Read and Understand	<p>✧ Exercises A, B and C: Read and explain the questions and answer them orally. Then ask the students to write the answers. Check and assess their work individually.</p>
Think and Answer	<p>✧ Exercise A: Read and explain the question and discuss it in class. A role model inspires us to share their achievements, understand how they overcame the obstacles on their way, and this helps us prevent ourselves making the mistakes they made, Briefly, they offer life lessons.</p>
Appreciating the Poem	<p>✧ Explain what is meant by imagery using the given instructions and examples. Metaphors and similies are also examples of imagery. One can give some examples. ['I wandered lonely as a cloud.' The roar of the sea. The wind howling. Etc.]</p> <p>✧ Exercise A: Discuss in class. Ask students to point out the imagery. List it on the blackboard. They can write the answers in their books.</p>
Write Well	<p>✧ Exercise A: Read out and discuss the exercise. What would be the best way to handle Ramesh's depression? How can he improve his nervousness and be confident on stage and in public speaking?</p>
AIL Activity	<p>✧ This can be done by the students on their own. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</p>