

# The Brain is Wider than the Sky

## Poem

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| <p><b>Read and Enjoy</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ This beautiful poem about the vastness of human thought and its power is written by Emily Dickinson, a very well-known American poet. The brain is a synonym in this poem for the power and reach of human thinking, ideas, imagination and creativity. It is as vast as God because it guides us to be bigger and better than we are. There are three stanzas in the poem, each with four lines with the rhyme scheme abcb.</li> <li>✧ In the first stanza, the poet talks about the scope of the brain, human thought, being 'wider than the Sky'. She says that if the human mind and the sky are placed beside each other, 'the one the other will contain', meaning that the brain is capable of assimilating something as vast and limitless as the sky. Even the reader, which means that one mind is capable of absorbing another mind equally vast.</li> <li>✧ In the second stanza, she compares the brain to the ocean, saying that it is 'deeper than the Sea'. She says if they are held together, 'Blue to Blue', 'one the other will absorb'. It is a beautiful comparison. The word 'blue' has two references. On the one hand is the blue colour of the sea; on the other, people who were well-read and intelligent were considered 'blue-stockings' or just 'blue'. So here the poet says that when the two 'blue' things are placed together, the brain will absorb the entire water of the sea like a sponge mopping up water from a little bucket! That is how deep the human mind is in comparison to the sea.</li> <li>✧ In the final stanza, the poet compares the human mind to God. To understand the comparison, it is necessary to recollect that God created the Universe and it says in the 'Bible' that the first thing He created was the word. In Indian religions also, we say that the Universe emerges from 'Naada' or sound. The poet, however, says here that the human mind will differ from God in weight, 'pound for pound'. If we 'Heft them', that is, if we lift them to assess their comparative weights, we will find that they are similar and yet different. While God is the Sound, complete and whole, the human mind is a part of it, 'as Syllable from Sound'.</li> <li>✧ Thus, while the human mind is more vast than the sky and deeper than the seas, it is a small part of God's creation and power.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Read and Understand</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercises A, B, C and D: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first. Then ask the students to answer the questions in their books/notebooks. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Think and Answer</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercises A and B: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first. Then ask the students to answer the questions in their books/notebooks. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Appreciating the Poem</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Explain what metaphors are – comparison between two different things by drawing similarities between them, without using the word 'like' or 'as'.</li> <li>✧ Exercises A and B: Explain the questions and ask the students to write the answers in their books/notebooks. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>  |

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| <b>Word Wise</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercises A and B: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first. Then ask students to answer the questions in their books/notebooks. Announce the answers aloud and let the students check their work in pairs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Write Well</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercise A: Explain the exercise and ask the students to do it on their own. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>AIL Activity</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ Exercise A: Make groups of four. Explain the exercise. Tell the class about visualisation and ask them to visualise. They can share their images and memories. Walk around and guide and assess their discussions.</li> <li>✧ Exercise B: The students can do this on their own.</li> </ul> |