

Ode on Solitude

by Alexander Pope

Happy the man, whose wish and care

A few paternal acres bound,

Content to breathe his native air,

In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,

Whose flocks supply him with attire,

Whose trees in summer yield him shade,

In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find

Hours, days, and years slide soft away,

In health of body, peace of mind,

Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,

Together mixed; sweet recreation;

And innocence, which most does please,

With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;

Thus unlamented let me die;

Steal from the world, and not a stone

Tell where I lie.

Questions

Annotate the poem as necessary. Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Stanza by stanza, explain or summarise what Pope says would make a person happy.
2. What is the **rhyme scheme** of this poem? What effect does the rhyme scheme have on the general **tone** of the poem? How does this affect the **mood**? → consistent rhyme gives structure and because it's regular, it helps the light and almost joyous tone of choosing to live a life of solitude
3. What is the significance of the final stanza? Consider the title of the poem, too. → it's not dark even though it's about death – the idea that choosing solitude is a good choice because it doesn't harm anyone
4. Here is some background information about Pope:

- he wrote "Ode on Solitude" when he was 12 years old
- at 12, he contracted tuberculosis of the bones which affected his growth by giving him a severe hunchback and many related health issues like respiratory problems and abdominal pain among many other ailments
- was an 18th century English poet who grew up Catholic to a linen merchant father in London
- while he attended Catholic school, he did not complete university and was self-educated; he read works from many classic writers such as Horace, Homer, and Virgil, but also Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dryden
- he made money by translating classic work from Homer (the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*) and used this money to move to Twickenham where he lived among other wealthy Londoners, and he created lavish gardens and a grotto there

→ Based on this information about Pope, why might he have written this poem? What might the theme be for "Ode on Solitude"?

Assignment:

You will be doing a dialectical journal for this poem. Refer to the attached handout for further help. Here is the basic information that you need.

On a separate sheet of paper, fold it in half and do the following:

Note-taking	Note-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- "They begin beating it with a hose/to find out what it really means" (15-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Speaker uses imagery of torturing a prisoner to show comparison of how students tend to analyse poetry

→ this forward slash shows **LINE BREAK**. Use it!

On the left side, you need to write word for word quotes from the text. Remember to add line numbers like so: (#)

On the right side, you need to write your observation and interpretation of the quote that you chose. Definitely make sure to write down the kind of poetic devices used as much as you can.

Dialectical Journal Assignment

Left side: quote from the text

Right side: your observations and interpretation

"My mother is a flawless, modern building, created of glass and the smoothest and beautiful as if she were an architectural triumph, but this image is juxtaposed with the suggestion that she is likely a mess on the inside."

Inside are business offices furnished in beige carpets and gleaming chromium. In every room there are machines - computers, typewriters, intricate copiers. They are extremely efficient but empty like robots.

They are buzzing and clicking way, absorbing and spitting out information with the speed of people and situations immediately and without care/regard for others.

Sound. Downstairs, at ground level, people walk in and out, tracking mud and dirt over the steel-grey tiles, marring the cool perfection of the building. There are no comfortable chairs in the lobby." (218)

contract with:

"My dad is a warm wood stove"

what appears to be is the reason why Mrs

- mother's outward appearance is perfect and beautiful as if she were an architectural triumph, but this image is juxtaposed with the suggestion that she is likely a mess on the inside

- extremely efficient but empty like robots

- she makes and passes judgment of people and situations immediately and without care/regard for others

- this reveals so much of Charlotte's complex and distant relationship with her mother

you are, of course, allowed to connect yourself to the text → it's fine to add something like, "I would also describe my dad this way because he's loving and like a stove, his love warms our home and family" ↳ this does require interpretation

use literary terms like "image" and "juxtapose"

My notes on the right-hand side are **observations** of the quotes and are not explanations. You should **focus on interpretation of text** and **how it relates to what you feel are important aspects of the poem**. Perhaps this will lead you to think of theme, and you are free to make note of these observations.

- ★ **Longer does not equal better**; however, you *will* be marked on the quality and depth of your observations.
- you will be marked on your observations (the right-hand column)
- minimum number of notes on the right: 10 → no maximum, but as mentioned before, more is not necessarily better
- **when you're finished, go back and see if you can find commonalities such as groups of theme topics, images, repeated metaphors, or any other devices that show up often. What might the purpose of these repetitions be for the overall poem?**
 - o You might want to colour code these groups. If you do, label them.

Assignment: _____/20