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Introduction

1. Romanticism gained momentum in the latter half of the eighteenth century as a reaction to what three developments?
2. Reformers and revolutionaries demanded that the equality and rights of man be recognized. List two or three positive developments as a result.
3. On the European continent, what was the most dramatic event of the Romantic era?
4. What did Wordsworth and Coleridge jointly publish that determined the direction of Romantic poetry?
5. Identify four general characteristics of Romantic poetry (just a brief phrase for each will suffice).
6. What were three areas that fascinated Romantic writers?
7. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) touched on another Romantic preoccupation, the ____.
8. Identify two major sub-genres of Romantic literature.
9. Many novelists in the Romantic era were ____, such as the enduring ____.
10. What is the title of Thomas Gray's most famous poem? Why is it the "quintessential 'graveyard' poem"?
11. What did William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* express, respectively?
12. Robert Burns's *Kilmarnock Poems* brought him instant fame, and he was hailed as a ____, bringing ____
13. List one famous poem by William Wordsworth and one by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
14. Who comprised the younger set of Romantic poets?
15. List one famous poem by each of the three younger set of Romantic poets.

❧ THOMAS GRAY ❧

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

Prepare to think about the poem and its Central One Idea by drawing upon your prior knowledge, experience, or interests.

1. Thomas Gray's friend, Richard West, died in 1742. He may have written this poem with his friend in mind. Take a minute to imagine walking through an old churchyard cemetery. Old and weathered, the headstones have been there for decades. What do you see? What do hear? What comes to mind regarding the subject of death?

GRAMMAR | Presentation

Discover essential facts, elements, and features of the poem through the Reading Notes, Words to Be Defined, and Comprehension Questions.

READING NOTES

1. **elegy** – a sustained, formal poem that mourns the loss of someone or something; a lament or a sadly meditative poem on a solemn theme
2. **glebe** (l. 26) – fields; lands
3. **annals** (l. 32) – historical records
4. **(Oliver) Cromwell** (l. 60) – Oliver Cromwell was an English political leader who led the anti-Royalists during the English Civil War. He then ruled as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth from 1649-1660.

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| areas; boundaries | hidden; isolated |
| to assign; to ascribe | songs of grief or lamentation; |
| decaying; decomposing | funeral songs |
| dishonorable; shameful | the sound of a slowly rung bell, |
| disrespectful; scornful | usually for a death or funeral |
| extreme poverty | usual; customary |

1. The curfew tolls the **knell** of parting day, *n.* (l. 1)
2. Where heaves the turf in many a **mouldering** heap, *adj.* (l. 14)
3. Nor Grandeur hear with a **disdainful** smile, *adj.* (l. 31)
4. Nor you, ye Proud, **impute** to these the fault, *v.* (l. 37)
5. Chill **Penury** repressed their noble rage, *n.* (l. 51)
6. Far from the madding crowd's **ignoble** strife, *adj.* (l. 73)
7. Along the cool **sequestered** vale of life, *adj.* (l. 75)
8. Left the warm **precincts** of the cheerful day, *n.* (l. 87)
9. Ev'n in our ashes live their **wonted** fires. *adj.* (l. 92)
10. The next with **dirges** due in sad array, *n.* (l. 113)



Read "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," marking the poem in key places.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Conduct a **scansion** of the first stanza. What is its **meter** and **rhyme scheme**?
2. Describe the **setting** and the **mood** in stanza 1. What does the speaker reveal about his state of mind?
3. List a couple details of **imagery** from stanzas 2-3.
4. What significant **image** does the speaker present in stanza 4? Include a quote in your answer.
5. List a couple of earthly pleasures that the dead will no longer be able to enjoy.

6. What sort of people are buried in the country churchyard?
7. Briefly **summarize** stanza 8, and explain the use of **personification**.
8. What does he caution "the proud" against in stanza 10?
9. What is the broad idea for stanzas 13-19?
10. What kinds of monuments do the simple, poor folk have over their graves? List a couple details from stanzas 20-21.
11. According to stanzas 24-25, what is the **purpose** of the poem? Include a phrase or line in your answer.
12. In stanzas 24-29, how does the speaker introduce the topic of death as it relates to himself? What story does he imagine?
13. At the end of the speaker's imagined story (st. 29), what does the country swain finally ask the kindred spirit to do?
14. What does the speaker imagine will be written on his gravestone? List a few of his conjectures.

LOGIC | Dialectic

*Reason with the facts, elements, and features of the poem;
sort, arrange, compare, and connect ideas – and begin
to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.*

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

1. What **metaphor** does the speaker use in stanza 1 which points toward the **theme** of the poem?
2. What important **message** is conveyed in stanza 9? Do you agree with the speaker?
3. To what effect are **rhetorical questions** and **imagery** used in lines 41-44? What point is the speaker making?
4. Through various **metaphors**, what is the speaker saying in stanzas 14-15?
5. **Summarize** the last stanza. What is the closing thought of the speaker's epitaph?

RHETORIC | Expression

Express in your own words the Central One Idea with supporting points.

RHETORICAL EXPRESSION

To be answered in your Literature Notebook in preparation for your essay.

1. In 2-3 sentences, **summarize** the poem.
 2. Write the **Central One Idea** of the poem in a precise, eloquent sentence.
- ◆ **Central Quote:** Choose a line or two from anywhere in the poem that you think best embodies the Central One Idea. With good penmanship, write it in your Literature Notebook.
- ① **Write the Central One Idea as expressed by the teacher.**

WRITING OPTION:

Take some time to visit a cemetery. Take a writing journal with you. Spend some time walking around and reflecting on your surroundings. What do you see and feel? Read some gravestones. Think about each grave as containing a person who was once alive, but who is now dead. Reflect on death in general. And finally, reflect on your own death. Write a reflective piece or a poem capturing the thoughts and feelings of your experience in the cemetery.