



The Tables Turned by William Wordsworth

Before reading

- 1 Write on the board 'The Tables Turned'. Ask students to think about the meaning of this imagery and elicit responses. Explain that 'to turn the tables' is an idiom in English meaning *to change a situation, or reverse fortune*.
- 2 Refer students to the *About the poet* box on page 1 of their worksheet. Explain that here a *movement* means a particular style in literature that is followed by a group of writers/poets over a specific period of time.

Students look at the information and choose the descriptions that they think best describe a Romantic poet. Encourage them to draw on any ideas they may already have about the Romantic movement, or other poetry and literature they have read. When they have finished, elicit responses in open class.

Suggested answers

1, 3, 4, 6

CULTURAL INFORMATION

The Romantic Movement was an artistic, literary and intellectual movement, which started in Europe at the end of the 18th century and was at its peak from 1800 to 1850. The movement emphasised the importance of the individual, intense emotions, the beauty of nature and spontaneity in all artistic forms. It contrasted with Classicism, which was based upon structured, intellectual, rational thought. Wordsworth is thought of as one of the founders of the Romantic Movement. Other prominent romantic poets were Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake.

While reading

- 1 Ask a volunteer to read the first stanza aloud. Have students decide which summary fits best. Students then match the other two summaries to the stanzas in pairs. Elicit answers in open class. Then have students work in pairs to match the summaries to stanzas 6, 7 and 8. Refer students to the *Vocabulary focus* box for additional support with new language.

Answers

1 2 2 4 3 1 6 8 7 6 8 7

- 2 Ask students to look at the first example and find where it appears in the complete poem. Looking at the phrase in context, students decide whether it relates to a life studying indoors or to nature. Students can complete the exercise in pairs.

Answers

1 B 2 N 3 B 4 B 5 N 6 N

- 3 Ask students to work with a partner and complete the sense chart following the examples given with nouns and adjectives in the poem that refer to or describe nature.

You could start to complete the chart on the board as a class, and then encourage students to make longer lists in their notebooks.

Example answers

Nouns: sun, mountain, lustre, fields, wood/woodland, linnet, throstle, light. **Adjectives:** freshening, mellow, green, sweet, yellow, blithe, vernal

- 4 Refer students back to stanza 5 in the poem. Ask students to discuss the meaning of the phrase in pairs and then invite suggestions.

Suggested answers

'She has a world of ready wealth', means that nature is full of valuable and useful things that are available to us.

After reading

- 1 Students discuss which of the sentences is the best summary of the poem in pairs. Then elicit responses in open class.

Suggested answers

The most suitable sentence is 3.

Before doing exercise 2, ask students to read the poem aloud. This can be done as a whole class chorally, or a split class, or with individual students reading each stanza. Encourage students to listen for the rhythm of the lines.

- 2 Individually, students look at the first stanza of the poem and underline the rhyming words. Then ask them to try to complete the final words in the second stanza from memory without looking back at the poem. Check their responses in open class.

Answers

stanza 1: books, looks; double, trouble

stanza 2: head, spread; mellow, yellow

- 3a Refer students to the title of the poem again. Ask them if they think the poet 'turns the tables' and presents a different perspective on what nature can teach us. In small groups, students think of their own examples of what can be learned from nature and the outdoors. You could write the ideas from the worksheet on the board to help students. Remind them that these are examples and that they may choose other ideas.
- 3b Students choose one idea from exercise 1 in pairs. Refer them back to their sense chart in the *While reading* section to find suitable nouns and adjectives for their chosen idea.
- 4 In pairs, students write their stanza. Encourage them to follow the rhyming pattern of *The Tables Turned*. Monitor and provide help where necessary. Students read their complete stanza aloud to the class. They could do this in their pairs, with each student reading alternate lines to emphasise the lines that rhyme.