

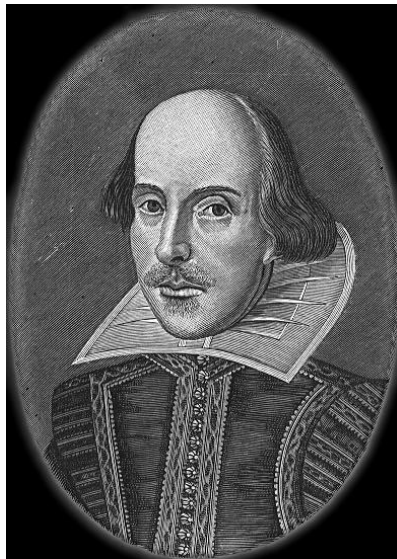
All the World is a Stage and Vocabulary

Section Objectives

- Make predictions; make inferences about character motivation; synthesize ideas from different sources; connect literature and the news; and distinguish fact from opinion.
- Understand, analyze, and compare universal themes, and compare themes across genres.
- Understand word origins; understand word analogies; create semantic charts; understand multiple meaning words.

All the World's a Stage .. by William Shakespeare from As You Like It, Act II Sc vii

The World's a Stage by Hilaire Belloc



Contrasting Themes with a Common Motif

The literary texts for this lesson will suggest that you note how a poet can manipulate a familiar image employed from a previous literary work to render a quite different message for his readers within a new context. The first work you will study is taken from one of the most famous speeches delivered in all of Shakespearean drama: Jaques's "All the world's a stage..." speech to Duke Senior from Act II, scene vii in *As You Like It*.

Pantaloons, a stock character in the commedia dell'arte, or Italian theatrical comedy, was portrayed as a foolish old man in tight trousers and slippers. In Elizabethan times, the generic term **pantaloons** that Shakespeare refers to as "the sixth age of man," had come to mean any old man. Later the term, often used in the plural, was used to refer to men's wide breeches extending from waist to ankle, worn especially in England in the late seventeenth century.

Because this speech is often discussed apart from the context of the larger play, many refer to the speech simply as "The Seven Ages of Man." Several centuries later, the French-British poet Hilaire Belloc employed Shakespeare's image of players' various roles and performances on stage to yield a different perspective of the human condition.

All the World's a Stage

As you read first Shakespeare's treatment of this well-known motif, note how Shakespeare carries forward the central image of an actor's performance upon a stage throughout the entire extent of the poem. Rich in vivid, poetic language and strong commentary of the human experience, this passage studied in isolation is a pessimistic expression of the futility of life. Looking more closely, note the seven distinctive stages that the speaker identifies as the inevitable path each person takes or "performs" throughout the course of his/her life. Highlight within the text images and descriptive details that characterize each dramatically distinctive stage of human development. What seems to be the speaker's conclusion about the meaning of life in the final lines? (Note for meaning: the word *sans* means "without.") Re-read the poem once more. How would you describe the general tone of the passage?

The World's a Stage

Now turning your attention to the comparison text for this lesson, look for the famous motif as it is employed in Hilaire Belloc's "The World's a Stage." Highlight in one color within the poem all references to Shakespeare's motif. Where in the poem do you note Belloc's quite different treatment of the motif? Highlight any such references in another color.

How might you determine that Belloc is not comfortable with such fatalistic conclusions as evidenced in Jaques's speech?

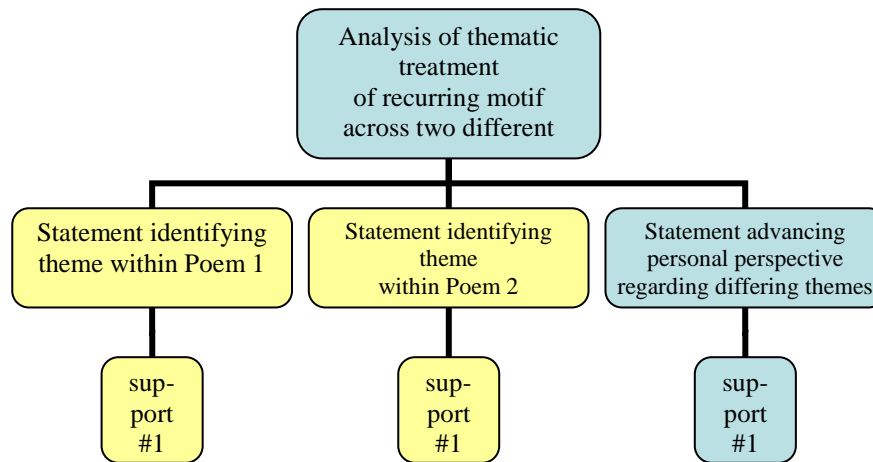
Remembering Composition Form and Writing Process

The writing process is consistent with this next writing assignment in following the steps of essay development just as with other essays you have written in your experience as a student writer. First you will explore the topic or prompt. In this assignment, the prompt directs you to write an analysis of the comparative themes found in Shakespeare's "Seven Ages of Man" and Belloc's "The World's a Stage." Specifically, after analyzing the poet's themes within each poem, write persuasively to help your reader recognize what you have observed regarding the two different themes of that each poet addresses regarding the human experience. Then move beyond these contrasting themes to make a statement regarding your own conclusions, yet working with the same central image of players upon the stage of life.

Following the prompt there is the pre-writing using the **graphic organizer** (see below), followed by the thesis or controlling idea for the draft and the first draft of the essay. You may develop your response with as many supportive insights as you wish, but follow the basic structure of your development as suggested in the graphic organizer. At least one of your pieces of supportive evidence for each work should be in the form of textual support from the poem to defend your thoughts. After the initial draft and your explanation has been shaped, you will proof your essay, revise your word choices and sentence structures, and make the final product as complete and polished as you can.

When a rubric for the writing is available, it helps in the rewriting process. The rubric for this course will be of particular assistance to you as you evaluate your final essay product. The point structure of the rubric may change, but the concepts will be consistent.

Graphic Organizer



Evaluation of written assignments (clear thesis must be identified for evaluation)

1. Content

5 = Insightful, illuminating interpretation. Invites reading; makes something of nothing; sees responsibilities.

4 = Absorbs ideas and interprets meaningfully the differing themes within two different poems. Writer is able to speak to the thematic statements within each text. Shows independent thinking and relationships.

3 = Repetitious and padded, general language, uninformative; little analysis, reliance on cliché.

2 = Exploits obvious because of lack of understanding. Fails to lend to topic; disinterested.

2. Form

5 = Develops flexibly with control; intuitive resources used, good rhythmic sense of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words.

4 = Develops with clear sense of order but often unbalanced development; conscious effort to unify.

3 = Unplanned or almost aimless; canned; generalizations lack support.

2 = Aimless; no overall conception or enough parts to make whole.

3. Diction (vocabulary)

5 = Appropriate use of new vocabulary; individuality, apt use of language; free of cliché and jargon.

4 = Words adequate; good lexicon but tends to be dull.

3 = Limited range of words; cliché, jargon, lacks range.

2 = Uses safe words only.

4. Mechanics (grammar)

5 = Grasp of advanced grammar and syntax.

4 = Generally correct and integrated; attempts complex forms of expression.

3 = Can be accurate or inaccurate; no complex forms of expression evident.

2 = Incidence of error on simple forms high.

5. Style (application of grammar in form)

5 = Capable of changing voices, strong personal voice, inventive.

4 = Stylistic variety; changes voice with some clarity; personal voice developing.

3 = Lacks flow, lacks variety, lacks feeling of ease (personal voice).

2 = Short choppy sentences; convoluted; resembling rapid thought associations.