

Lesson 2

Dreams in Literature

Introduction:

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the great Romantic poet, considered poets dreamers because they have the ability to turn “our wish, our power, our thought” into “a deed.” Poets give voice to what we desire and strive hard to achieve. They write about the dreams of lovers, men of action, patriots, social reformers, workers and just about anyone given to imagining a better tomorrow for themselves and for others.

In the previous lessons we’ve learnt about different aspects of dreams. In this lesson, we will read two poems written by two poets from two sides of the Atlantic. While D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) was an English novelist, poet and essayist, Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was an American poet, novelist and playwright. Hughes was also a leader of the Harlem Renaissance which attempted to bring changes in the lives of the Black people in the 1920s.

A. Find out more about Lawrence and Hughes from the Internet. Lawrence was more famous as a novelist, so write down the names of five of his novels. Then present your findings in a group to the class.

B. Now read the two poems and answer the questions that follow.

Dreams

– D. H. Lawrence

All people dream, but not equally.
Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their mind,
Wake in the morning to find that it was vanity.

But the dreamers of the day are dangerous people,
For they dream their dreams with open eyes,
And make them come true.

Dreams

– Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
 For if dreams die
 Life is a broken-winged bird
 That cannot fly.
 Hold fast to dreams
 For when dreams go
 Life is a barren field
 Frozen with snow.

C. What are the meanings of the following words and phrases?

- a. recesses of the mind
- b. dusty
- c. make something come true
- d. vanity
- e. a broken-winged bird
- f. barren field
- g. frozen

D. What parts of speech are the following words?

- a. fast
- b. winged
- c. snow
- d. equally
- e. vanity
- f. true

E. Read the texts in the grid and match the lines of the poems in Column A with the texts in Column B to understand the poem. One is done for you.

Column A	Column B
1. All people dream but not equally	a. They wake up in the morning and find out that their dream was unreal and was just a vision.
2. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their mind	b. They are aware of what they are dreaming which they want to materialize.
3. Wake in the morning to find that it was vanity	c. We all dream though our dreams are different.
4. But the dreamers of the day are dangerous people	d. They are like most of us, who dream at night while asleep.
5. For they dream with open eyes	e. They materialize their dream
6. And make them come true	f. Daydreamers cannot be trusted



F. Answer the following questions.

- a. What type of dreams is Lawrence referring to in his poem?
- b. Why does he consider them dangerous?
- c. What is the meaning of 'dreaming with open eyes'?
- d. What is Hughes telling his readers to do?
- e. Why does he want his readers to hold fast to their dreams?
- f. Why, according to Hughes, are dreams so important in our lives?
- g. What type of dreams do the two poets highlight?

G. Write a summary of both the poems in 150 words each.**H. Now read the following extract, which is taken from a translation of *The Dreams*, a collection of 104 dreams by the Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, first published between 2000 and 2003.****Dream #6****Naguib Mahfouz**

The TELEPHONE RANG and the voice at the other end said, "Shaykh Muharram, your teacher, speaking."

I answered politely with a reverent air, "My mentor is most welcome."

"I'm coming to visit you," he said.

"Looking forward to receiving you," I replied.

I felt not the slightest astonishment—though I had walked in his funeral procession some sixty years before. A host of indelible memories came back to me about my old instructor. I remembered his handsome face and his elegant clothes—and the extreme harshness with which he treated his pupils. The shaykh showed up with his lustrous jubba and caftan, and his spiraling turban, saying without prologue, "Over there, I have dwelt with many reciters of ancient verse, as well as experts on religion. After talking with them, I realized that some of the lessons I used to give you were in need of correction. I have written the corrections on this paper I have brought you."

Having said this, he laid a folder on the table, and left.

Translated by Raymond Stock

I. Pair work

Underline the words in the text that you do not know, and share your underlined words with a partner. If your lists do not completely match, explain the meanings of the words you know to each other. Look up a dictionary to find meanings of words neither of you know.

Answer the following questions:

- i. Who was the caller mentioned at the beginning of the text? Is there anything unusual about the caller?
- ii. Are there any clues in the text that indicate the story being told is not based in reality but is instead a dream?
- iii. What is the narrator's opinion of their visitor?
- iv. What did the visitor bring for the narrator?
- v. We can infer from the narration that the two characters involved belong to different generations. Is there any indication of a clash between the views and beliefs of the older and the younger generation?
- vi. In your opinion, are there any beliefs held by the older generation that they should reconsider? If so, identify three lessons they should unlearn and explain your reasoning.

J. Group presentation

In the text, the narrator gives a description of their teacher's appearance. Work in groups to create a drawing or painting of the teacher based on the descriptions. Alternatively, you can design a wardrobe display by collecting or creating images of clothing items that match the character's style.

Once your visuals are ready, present them to the class and explain how they reflect the character's look and personality.

(Bonus: If your teacher allows, you could add a fun comparison between the narrator's instructor and your own teacher using your drawings or wardrobe designs!)



K. Dream journal

Have you noticed how you often forget your dreams moments after waking up, even the ones that seem too good to forget? Many people keep a record of their dreams by writing them down immediately after waking up.

Over the next month, try keeping a dream journal. At the end of the month, share your journal with your friends and vote on who had the most interesting dream.

L. There are many books written about the interpretation of dreams. In our culture, such books are often called “Khwabnama”. Try to find out more about this from your teacher or elders!

N. There is also a great novel titled Khwabnama. Have you heard about it? Find out who the author of the book is and write a few lines about the book and the author.