

Part Two

Standards Focus: Poetry Analysis

In Part Two, Montag reads a poem called “Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). Arnold’s poem is considered one of the most important of the 19th Century, as it explores the emptiness of the self-indulgent Victorian Era in England: a time when machines and industry took the place of manual labor, Darwinism and science questioned religious views, and epidemics of cholera and typhus killed thousands. The fact that Montag reads this particular poem to the women in *Fahrenheit 451* is no accident. Bradbury parallels the problems of the Victorian Era to those of the society of *Fahrenheit 451*; that the women don’t understand the poem at all even further exemplifies the poem’s significance.

Directions: For this exercise, you will be analyzing the poem “Dover Beach.” Next to each stanza, write what you think the poet is saying in the poem. If you would like, you may analyze it line by line, or summarize the message. When you have finished, complete the tasks and answer the questions on the next page.

Dover Beach

- 1 The sea is calm tonight, _____
- 2 The tide is full, the moon lies fair _____
- 3 Upon the straits; on the French coast the light _____
- 4 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand, _____
- 5 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. _____
- 6 Come to the window, sweet is the night air! _____

- 7 Only, from the long line of spray _____
- 8 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land, _____
- 9 Listen! you hear the grating roar _____
- 10 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, _____
- 11 At their return, up the high strand, _____
- 12 Begin, and cease, and then again begin, _____
- 13 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring _____
- 14 The eternal note of sadness in. _____

- 15 Sophocles long ago _____
- 16 Heard it on the Agean, and it brought _____
- 17 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow _____
- 18 Of human misery; we _____
- 19 Find also in the sound a thought, _____
- 20 Hearing it by this distant northern sea. _____

Name _____ Period _____

21 The Sea of Faith _____
22 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore _____
23 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled. _____
24 But now I only hear _____
25 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, _____
26 Retreating, to the breath _____
27 Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear _____
28 And naked shingles of the world. _____

29 Ah, love, let us be true _____
30 To one another! for the world, which seems _____
31 To lie before us like a land of dreams, _____
32 So various, so beautiful, so new, _____
33 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, _____
34 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain; _____
35 And we are here as on a darkling plain _____
36 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, _____
37 Where ignorant armies clash by night. _____

1. Circle the words in which *alliteration* is used. (Hint: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of (usually consecutive) words—this is NOT the same as rhyme!)
2. Underline the words in which *assonance* is used. (Hint: Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in a line—again, this is not the same as rhyme, and the spelling may be different.)
3. Which of the following BEST describes the author's tone in this poem? _____
 - a. sympathetic
 - b. disenchanting
 - c. apathetic
 - d. optimistic
4. Which of the following lines contains a simile? _____
 - a. The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 - b. Listen! you hear the grating roar
 - c. Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled
 - d. Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light
5. To what is Arnold MOST likely referring with the phrase "Sea of Faith"? _____
 - a. art
 - b. poetry
 - c. science
 - d. religion
6. Which of the following BEST describes the poem's theme? _____
 - a. Man is far more powerful than nature.
 - b. Nature's power can be felt in our souls.
 - c. Faith is disappearing, like the retreat of the waves on a beach.
 - d. Like a wave covering the sand, time disappears forever.