

## 2.4 Upon Westminster Bridge

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### Ice Breakers

(i) A bridge connects people at either sides of a river or valleys in cities or villages. Discuss with your partner the importance of a bridge to both the cities and the villages, and complete the table.

Ans.

Cities	Village
1. A bridge connects all the important areas in the city.	1. Bridges can connect Villages to main roadways across difficult mountain-terrain or rivers. Bridges can interconnect villages and villages to cities through highways.
2. Citizens are able to move easily around to and from all parts of the city using bridges. This reduces traffic congestion.	2. If remote villages are connected to highways transport is improved. Mainly healthcare can be reached even in bad weather conditions. So bridges help in everyday life as well as save lives.
3. Residential areas, commercial areas, shopping areas and other such specific areas and conveniently interconnected via bridges.	3. A bridge allows produce from in and around the village to be taken out by farmers, for sale. Modern transport like heavy trucks will need bridges and proper roads.
4. A bridge may be the shortest way to connect two vital location. For instance, the Bandra- Worli sea-link, in Mumbai.	4. Traders can bring wares safely and into remote villages from far-off places if there is a bridge.

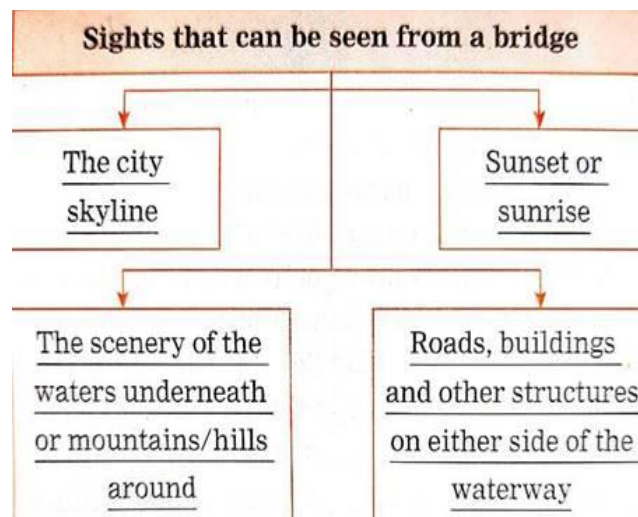
(ii) Building a bridge needs careful planning. Think about what goes on before the actual construction begins.

Ans. • Proper planning

- Soil-bedrock assessment,
- Assess what kind of traffic and loads the bridge will be used for
- Environmental factors are to be considered
- What kind of bridge would be best for the requirement
- Sustainability, usefulness and maintenance of the structure

- Planners provide alternatives for those residing on the bridge site.
- You might have visited a bridge. Complete the web describing the sights you could see from the bridge.

Ans.



### Paraphrase

We gather that the poet William Wordsworth was travelling over the Westminster Bridge early one morning when he stopped to admire the view before him. Inspired, he describes the beauty in front of him in the poem "Upon Westminster Bridge".

Wordsworth says there could not be a more beautiful scene on Earth than the one before him. Only someone who is very dull would ignore such a splendid sight. The city is quiet, not yet awake and seems to sparkle in the clean, early morning air. It is as if the city of London is covered by the morning beauty as a garment.

In that silent hour of sunrise, even the man made structures - ships, towers, domes, temples and theatres are all shining clean, as the air is yet unpolluted. The poet describes the beautiful early morning sun shining its rays on valley and hill and rock too. Never had the poet seen such a stunning sight as this or felt such deep peace.

The river, Thames, glided on slowly under the bridge. The people in their houses are asleep yet, and, collectively, their hearts rest quiet.

### Brainstorming

(A1) For preparing questions based on the poem, overall understanding of the poem is a must. Prepare a set of five questions. For example:  
What is the name of the bridge?

**Ans.** (1) During which part of the day is the poet looking at the view?

(2) What poetic device is used to describe the 'beauty of the morning'?

(3) What are the feelings the poet describes as he felt them at that time of morning?

(4) Pick out one example of 'personification' from the poem.

(5) Write down the rhyme scheme of the sonnet. What do you notice about the octave and sestet?

**(A2) (i) Choose the correct alternative for the given lines. Focus on the inference of the poet.**

**(a) 'Earth has not anything to show more fair:'**  
**The line means-**

**(1) The poet thinks that the place was not so good.**

**(2) The poet thinks that there is another place which is more beautiful than this.**

**(3) The poet thinks that there is no place on the earth which is as beautiful as this one.**

**Ans.** The poet thinks that the place was not so good.

**(b) 'Dull would he be of soul who could pass by'.**  
**The line means-**

**(1) One can walk over the bridge and ignore the surrounding beauty.**

**(2) One can halt at the place to enjoy the beauty.**

**(3) Anyone with an appreciative mind would not be able to ignore the beauty.**

**Ans.** Anyone with an appreciative mind would not be able to ignore the beauty.

**(ii) Earth has not anything to show more fair.'**  
**This line expresses the poet's feelings. The sight he saw from the bridge is beautiful. There are a few more lines similar to the above. With the help your partner find them and discuss what they express.**

**Ans.** (1) 'Never did sun more beautifully steep' The poet had never seen anything so beautifully lit up by the morning sun.

(2) 'Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm, so deep!" A feeling of profound peace was felt by the poet as he viewed the morning scene before him from Westminster Bridge.

(iii) The poem creates a delightful picture of the city, rich in its natural beauty. Work in pairs, groups and pick out the lines from the poem which give the pictorial effect to the poem. Write it in your own words.

**Ans.** The poem creates a delightful picture of London by depicting ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples vividly; in front of our eyes. These structures lie open to the clear sky and glitter brightly in the sunshine. The poet paints a picture of the first rays of the sun in all its splendour (glory) falling on these structures. The Thames flowing at its own pace and the silent houses before the beginning of a new day all add to the imagery of a still and sleeping city.

(A3) Find out the words and phrases which describe the following. One is done for you.

**Ans.**

sight	touching in its majesty
air	smokeless
river	glideth at his own sweet will
house	seem asleep
morning	beautiful
sun	in his first splendor

(A4) Read the line:

(i) The city now, doth, like a garment wear'.

The poet imagines that the city is wearing a beautiful garment. Hence, the figure of speech is personification. Find out more examples of personification from the poem.

**Ans.** 1. An example of Personification can be found in the line, 'This City now doth, like a garment, wear The beauty of the morning;'

In this line, the city is said to wear the beauty of the morning like a garment. Thus, the city has been compared to a person wearing clothes.

2. "In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;"

Personification - 'The sun' has been personified using the male pronoun 'his'.

3. The river glideth at his own sweet will:

Personification - The river has been given the animate quality of having its own 'will'.

(ii) 'Dull would he be of soul who could pass by.'

This line of the poem can be rewritten as:

'He would be of dull soul.'

The figure of speech is known as 'Inversion'.

Find out one more example of Inversion from the poem.

**Ans. 1. "Dull would he be of soul who could pass by"**

Inversion - The words in the line have been rearranged for poetic effect. The correct order should be "He could pass by would be of the dull soul".

**2. "Never did sun more beautifully steep"**

Inversion - The words in the line have been rearranged for poetic effect. The correct order should be "The sun never did more beautifully steep".

**3. "Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm, so deep!"**

Inversion - The words in the line have been rearranged for poetic effect. The correct order should be "I ne'er (never) saw, never felt, a calm so deep!".

(iii) The poem is a Petrarchan Sonnet. The poem is divided into two parts.

(a) An Octave

The first part comprising eight lines.

(b) A sestet

The second part comprising six lines.

Read the first four lines of the poem. The rhyme scheme is a b b a. Read the rhyme scheme for next four lines. It is a b b a. Now read the first three lines of the sestet and note the rhyme scheme. It is c d c. The rhyme scheme of the last three lines is d c d. This is the common design of a Petrarchan Sonnet.

**Ans.**

Features	Examples/Lines
Objects used	Earth, sun, ships, towers, temples, theatres, domes, fields
Praise/blames	Fair earth/ dull soul
Metaphor	..the very houses seem asleep
Simile	The city now doth like a garment wear the beauty of the morning;
Personification	The river glideth at his own sweet will
Number of lines	Fourteen
Rhyme scheme	Octave- abba, abba: Sestet - cdcdd.

(iv) The pride of any city is its skyline.

Write 5 lines about the place where you live and what makes you feel proud about it

**Ans.** I live in the metropolis of Mumbai - India's commercial capital, which is also called the 'City that never sleeps.' The people who live here proudly call themselves 'Mumbaikars'. The coastline along the city has many beaches, of which Juhu beach is a favourite for fast food. Marine Drive, or Queen's Necklace, is a beautiful sea-front promenade. The people of Mumbai are disciplined, punctual, hospitable and hard working, having large-hearts though they live in small, crowded spaces. People who come here to make a life are able to succeed if they sincerely work hard.

**(A5) (i) There is a common belief that cities have always flourished only after human intrusion over nature. Write a speech expressing your opinion about it.**

**Ans.** Good evening Honourable Chief Guest, our Respected Principal, Teachers, and Guests  
and dear friends.

It is such a privilege and truly an honour to speak before such an august audience.

The burning issue before people everywhere on the earth is 'Save Earth'. Earth, Nature, Environment, Endangered species, Deforestation, all these are different faces of the same disease. And what is this disease? HUMANS! Humans are the CANCER, growing on and inside Mother Earth. We intrude on her, kill her creatures, destroy her gifts, poison her waters, and degrade her body, all for human comfort. But can we really BE comfortable?

What are the politicians, builders and other powerful people leaving for Us the next generation? And what will we leave for our children? We need to question the huge damage TODAY-because we will be the adults starting our life on this earth TOMORROW.

A city is an area in which a large number of people live close together. Early man lived in hamlets which became organized villages, then towns, cities and now mega cities. At every stage of development, human convenience took priority and Nature was the victim.

It is said that we have made 'progresses' with science!  
But have we really?

Technology rapidly developed so fast that humans seem to have completely lost touch with nature. Non-stop urbanization! Building - roads, housing structures, malls, industries, bridges, resorts, entertainment parks, hotels, golf-courses, dams, transport facilities, high-rises, technology parks - and the list goes on.

In spite of early warnings, after decades of abuse, there are results. The world is now seeing the punishment in the form of climate change. There are insufficient rains in places, floods in others, soil erosion, landslides.

Farmer suicides are happening due to droughts. Migration from villages to cities occurs due to poor harvests. But migrants to cities do not get work. They live in crowded unhealthy conditions.

Thus building cities without connection to Nature is disastrous. Even school

children. realized the serious situation. They are demanding that the damage to earth must stop or what a world will they inherit?

A lot of people ask 'Are we humans, parasites?'

But successful parasites keep their hosts. alive. We are slowly killing our host! So we are not even proper parasites!

People have realized that development has to also keep in mind that there should be minimum damage to earth and environment. The population explosion has been the root cause. Many other factors have added to uncontrolled growth of cities and the shrinking of green cover.

"There is enough and More for man's needs but NOT for man's greed!"

All over the world many ideas are being developed to make existing cities green. to make industries eco-friendly. Humans must adopt nature-friendly practices. Nature should not be damaged for human development.

Solar power and wind-power are being harnessed to reduce use of fossil-fuel. Buildings called 'Vertical forests' are being built. City spaces have useful greenery like vegetables and fruits grown to feed the people instead of useless ornamental plants.

It may sadly be too little too late. So much of damage done in such a short span of time may be difficult to reverse or repair.

Most of India is in the villages. It is only recently that cities and mega cities are growing. The need for cities to grow can also be reduced if the rural population finds it profitable to stay in the villages. The Farmer must be respected and supported because he feeds the millions. Technology must reach the farmer and he should find farming is rewarding in the village itself.

If all possible remedial steps are taken worldwide and immediately, together we may be able to slow down the deterioration of our planet. Let us hope there is a united effort from world leaders and the whole of humankind.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to speak on this platform before such eminent dignitaries and on such an important occasion. I thank the organizers for inviting me to air my views on today's topic. I thank the audience for their time and appreciation.

Thank you.

**(i) Compose a poem on an imaginary village. Try to maintain the rhyme scheme in the poem. You may begin like this....**

**Settled on the bank of a river**

**Like a queen.**

**Is my beautiful village.**

**Full of bushes green.**

**Ans.**

Settled on the bank of a river

Like a queen.



Is my beautiful village  
Full of bushes green.

The happy cow  
Whisks her tail  
As the cowherd  
Sleeps in the shade.

The colourful  
Laughing ladies chatter  
On their way to  
Collect water.

Sunset sees the wise  
Men meet.  
Telling children stories  
Under the mangoes sweet.

Or exchanging  
Memories of days  
Bygone, their  
Youthful phase.

**(iii) Write an appreciation of the sonnet. Refer to the earlier poems for the points to be covered for appreciation.**

**Ans.** Though William Wordsworth is known for his poems on nature, 'Upon Westminster Bridge', describes an early morning view of London city. The poet marvels at the vistas before him, covered in the glory of the first light of day. All features, both natural and man-made had never appeared more beautiful. Only an unfeeling heart would not be touched by such a splendid scene, feels Wordsworth.

This Petrarchan sonnet has the abba abba octave and the cdc dcd sestet. With the vivid imagery the reader is able to visualize the poem. Inversion adds emphasis, while personification of the sun and river Thames brings the reader closer to the scene. The poet's heart is touched by a 'deep calm', as never before, on that morning when he stood looking upon hill and valley, dome, theatre and temple. The air was unspoiled by smog and the river glided by with no boat or ship on it. While he stood admiring, London's heart was quietly asleep, the people and sailing vessels, the dust and the noise had not yet begun their day.

**(iv) Write a summary of the sonnet. Refer to the earlier poems for the points to be covered for writing the summary.**

**Ans.** A bridge is a vantage point for interesting views and this is true of Wordsworth's poem too. 'Upon Westminster Bridge' allows the reader to feel



almost as surprised as the poet does about the scene he describes. It could have been the first time he had that view. The early morning light and the quietness of the surroundings make it unexpectedly lovely. The poet gazes at the hills and rock, ships and towers covered by the glorious golden sunlight of dawn. Beauty is almost like a garment that has covered the scene and the poet feels only a very dull person would pass by without noticing and enjoying the lovely sight. He feels a deep peace.

**(v) While building a bridge, a group of people come together. They are architects, designers, engineers, officers, masons, politicians, building material suppliers, carpenters, etc. Write about the qualifications of these people. Choose any career from the list above and complete the table.**

**Ans. Your choice of career/careers**

I would choose to be an architect

**Skills/Qualifications**

I have seen different kinds of buildings, different styles and built in different periods of history or in recent times. I have a good hand at drawing, a good eye for beauty. I have good grades in drawing exams and hope to do a Bachelor's Degree in architecture

**(A6) Project**

**Given below are a few famous bridges in India. Find out more information about them and write in your notebook.**

**(a) The Howrah Bridge**

**(b) Laxman Zhula**

**(c) Pamban Bridge.**

**(d) Worli Sea Link**

**Ans. (a) The Howrah Bridge - across River Hoogly in Kolkata, West Bengal**

**(b) Lakshman Jhoola, Near Rishikesh, across River Ganga.**

**(c) Pamban Bridge connecting Rameswaram to the Mainland India across Palk Strait**

**(d) Bandra - Worli Sea Link - It is a cable bridge that connects Bandra in the west of Mumbai to Worli in the southern part of Mumbai.**