

P.3 Ozymandias

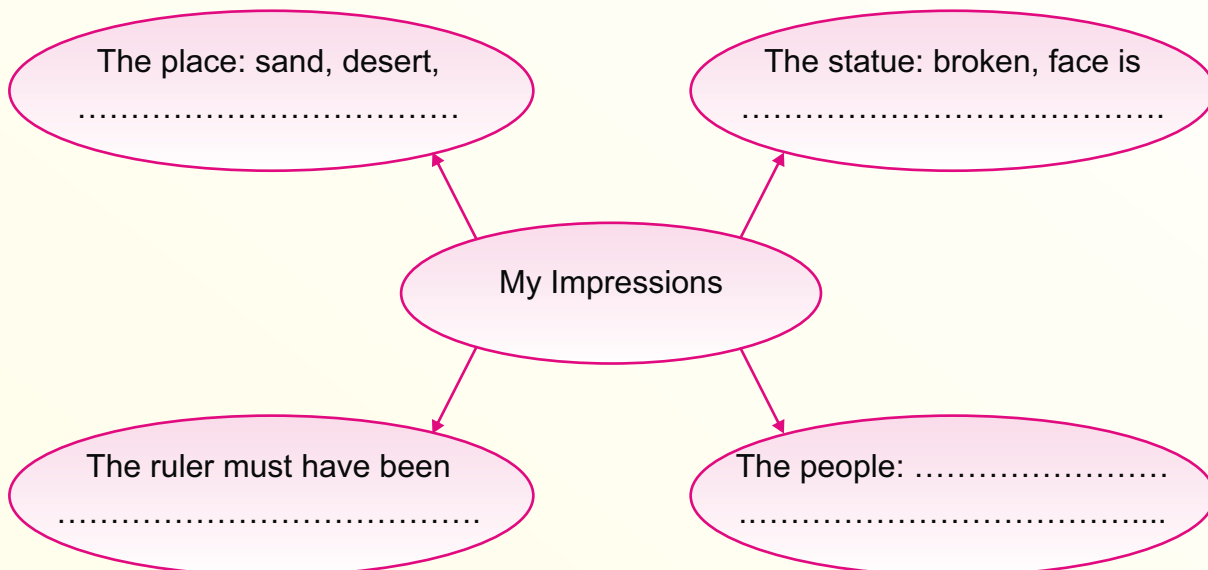
by Percy Bysshe Shelley

1. Look at the picture given below.



While on a sight-seeing tour to an old and mysterious country far away from home, you have had seen this statue. Discuss with your partner what this picture tells you about the people, the place and the ruler.

Note down your ideas in the web-chart.



2. Write a letter to your friend about the sight you saw and your impression of it. You may create necessary details.
3. Now read the poem 'Ozymandias' by Percy Bysshe Shelley

OZYMANDIAS

- I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and **trunkless**¹ legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered **visage**² lies, whose frown,
 5 And wrinkled lip, and **sneer**³ of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions **read**⁴
 Which yet survive, **stamped**⁵ on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 10 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing **beside**⁶ remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

About the Poet

The son of a Rich Tory Squire, Percy Bysshe Shelley was educated at Eton and Oxford. Shelley came under the influence of the revolutionary ideas of the English philosopher, William Godwin, whose daughter, Mary Godwin, he ultimately married. In 1818, Shelley left for Italy. He drowned in the Bay of Spezia in 1822.

4. Answer the following questions by selecting the correct options.

- (a) The poem is set in _____ .
- (i) the wilderness
 - (ii) an ancient land
 - (iii) a palace
 - (iv) a desert

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- 1 **trunkless**: without the upper body (the main part of the body of a human being or an animal, excluding the head, neck, and limbs)
 - 2 **visage**: face
 - 3 **sneer**: facial expression of scorn or hostility in which the upper lip may be raised
 - 4 **read**: interpreted
 - 5 **stamped**: sculpted
 - 6 **beside**: else

- (b) Select the option that includes the set of qualities that the poet attributes to Ozymandias, in the given extract.
- (I) boastful, furious, manipulative
 - (ii) ruthless, arrogant, desperate
 - (iii) haughty, self-serving, contemptuous
 - (iv) ambitious, aggressive, cruel
- (c) In the line, "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings", the poet makes an indirect reference to an ancient empire to remind readers that_____.
- (i) Time can be conquered
 - (ii) humility is a great virtue
 - (iii) the glory of the king is everlasting
 - (iv) a monarch's power is ephemeral
- (d) The words 'bare' and 'decay' indicate that the mighty ruler has become_____.
- (i) obscure
 - (ii) defenceless
 - (iii) dejected
 - (iv) indestructible
- (e) The tone of the poem is_____.
- (i) mocking
 - (ii) nostalgic
 - (iii) gloomy
 - (iv) gloating

5. Answer the following questions briefly.

- (a) *"Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"* Who is Ozymandias referring to when he speaks of 'ye Mighty'? Why should they despair ?
- (b) Bring out the irony in the poem.
- (c) The poem re-emphasizes the idea that political power is transient but art is eternal and it survives. Do you agree? Why/ Why not?
- (d) Overarching ambition can lead to great leaders and their downfall. Substantiate your position in favour or in opposition to this statement, with two points each.

- (e) '*Nothing beside remains.*' What does the narrator mean when he says these words?
- (f) What message is conveyed through this poem?

6. Identify and rewrite the lines from the poem spoken by the narrator, the traveller and Ozymandias. What impact do you think these three voices have on the reader?

The Narrator: _____

The Traveller: _____

Ozymandias: _____

7. Shelley's sonnet follows the traditional structure of the fourteen-line Italian sonnet, featuring an opening octave, or a set of eight lines, that presents a conflict or dilemma, followed by a sestet, or a set of six lines, that offers some resolution or commentary upon the proposition introduced in the octave. Read the poem carefully and complete the following table on the structure of the poem.

	Rhyme Scheme	Theme
Octave		
Sestet		

8. Complete the table listing the poetic devices used by Shelley in Ozymandias.

Poetic Device	Lines from the poem
Alliteration	<i>...and sneer of cold command</i>
Synecdoche (substitution of a part to stand for the whole, or the whole to stand for a part)	<i>the hand that mock'd them</i>

- Imagine that Ozymandias comes back to life and as he sees the condition of his statue, realisation dawns on him and he pens down his thoughts in a diary. As Ozymandias, make this diary entry in about 150 words. You could begin like this: I thought I was the mightiest of all but...
- 'Ozymandias' and 'Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments' are based on the theme of Time. Compare the two sonnets in terms of the manner in which Time is treated by the poets. Write your answer in about 150 words.
- 'None are so empty as those who are full of themselves.' Compare and contrast the characters of Mrs. Packletide and Ozymandias in light of this statement.
- Imagine the traveller of the poem writes a diary entry, narrating his personal impressions about the trunkless statue and feelings about being in the antique land.

You may begin like this...

The moment I saw the vast stretches of sand I couldn't contain my excitement. In the midst of this sandy desert, I saw...