

## Questions: Poems by W. B. Yeats

### *‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’*

1. Write critical analysis of the poem ‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’
2. **“We have no gift to set a statesman right”** – Explain this line written by W B Yeats in his poem ‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’.
3. In the poem ‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’, in the fourth line [‘He has had enough of meddling who can please’], ‘He’ can be read as a pronoun used for either ‘Poets’ or ‘Statesmen’. What sort of difference in the meaning of the poem can be noted if it is read as either ‘poets’ or ‘statesmen’?
4. ‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’ is written in sestet (six lines). What is the sense of the first three lines and that of the last three lines?
5. The poem ‘On Being Asked for a War Poem’ is a very odd act. It is a sort of refusal-to-assent wherein a poet denies and yet writes a poem. What according to you might be the meaning for such an odd situation in which this poem is written?

### *‘The Second Coming’*

1. Write an essay on the critical analysis of the poem ‘The Second Coming’.
2. Explain these lines from the poem ‘The Second Coming’ –  
“The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.”

3. Explain these lines from the poem *The Second Coming*; -

“The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity”

4. What do these lines mean in ‘*The Second Coming*’ –

“somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs”

5. “*The Second Coming*” presents a nightmarish apocalyptic scenario, as the speaker describes human beings’ increasing loss of control and tendency towards violence and anarchy. Exemplify with your reading of the poem ‘*The Second Coming*’.

6. Write a note on the theme of ‘civilization, chaos and control’ in ‘*The Second Coming*’.

7. Write a note on the theme of ‘morality and Christianity’ in ‘*The Second Coming*’.

8. Explain the title of the poem ‘*The Second Coming*’.

9. Is there any possibility of reading ‘*The Second Coming*’ as a pandemic poem?

10. Elizabeth Outka argues in ‘*Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and the Interwar Literature*’ that the writers of the era were not forgetful of the Spanish Flu. It was there but was not so immediately obvious. Is there any possibility to unearth it in the poem ‘*The Second Coming*’?