

Theme: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(1807-1882)

I.Vocabulary work

1.Check these words

prominent dreamy adversity quit fame offensive bard courtesy gentleness
--

2.Vocabulary practice

Match the words with their definitions

1. prominent	A. a poet, especially one who writes impassioned, lyrical, or epic verse.
2. dreamy	B. a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune
3.adversity	C. having a quality that thrusts itself into attention
4. quit	D. the quality of being calm, kind, or soft
5 .fame	E. given to daydreaming or reverie. abounding in dreams
6. offensive	F. leave (a place), usually permanently
7 . bard	G.the showing of politeness in one's attitude and behaviour towards others
8 .courtesy	H. causing someone to feel resentful, upset, or annoyed
9 . gentleness	

	I . the state of being known or talked about by many people, especially on account of notable achievements
--	--

II Reading Comprehension

1. Read the text

People around the world know Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetry even if they don't know who wrote it. His poetry is recited to us in childhood, and lines from his poems follow us all through our lives. In the mid 1800's the Chinese government presented Longfellow with a fan inscribed with his poem *The Psalm of Life*. His poems 5. have been translated 6. into dozens of languages.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine—then still part of Massachusetts—on February 27, 1807, the second son in a family of eight children. His mother, Zilpah Wadsworth, was the daughter of a Revolutionary War hero. His father, Stephen Longfellow, was a **prominent** Portland lawyer and later a member of Congress.

Henry was a **dreamy** boy who loved to read. He heard sailors speaking Spanish, French and German in the Portland streets and liked stories set in foreign places: *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the plays of Shakespeare.

After graduating from Bowdoin College, Longfellow studied modern languages in Europe for three years, then returned to Bowdoin to teach them

Longfellow took a position at Harvard in 1836. Three years later, at the age of 32, he published his first collection of poems, *Voices of the Night*, followed in 1841 by *Ballads and Other Poems*. Many of these poems ("A Psalm of Life," for example) showed people triumphing over **adversity**, and in a struggling young nation that theme was inspiring. Both books were very popular, but Longfellow's growing duties as a professor left him little time to write more.

In 1854, Longfellow decided to **quit** teaching to devote all his time to poetry. He published *Hiawatha*, a long poem about Native American life

When the Civil War ended in 1865, the poet was 58. His most important work was finished, but his **fame** kept growing. In London alone, 24 different companies were publishing his work. His poems were popular throughout the English-speaking world, and they were widely translated, making him the most famous American of his day. His admirers included Lincoln, Dickens, and Baudelaire.

From 1866 to 1880, Longfellow published seven more books of poetry, and his seventy-fifth birthday in 1882 was celebrated across the country. But his health was failing, and he died the following month, on March 24. When [Walt Whitman](#) heard of the poet's death, he wrote that, while Longfellow's work "brings nothing **offensive** or new, does not deal hard blows," he was the sort of **bard** most needed in a materialistic age: "He comes as the poet of melancholy, **courtesy**, deference—poet of all sympathetic **gentleness**—and universal poet of women and young people. I should have to think long if I were asked to name the man who has done more and in more valuable directions, for America."

2. Answer the questions:

1. What is one reason why people around the world know Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetry?

- A. It is recited to us in childhood.
- B. Longfellow was a prominent lawyer.
- C. His poems were published in foreign languages.
- D. Longfellow studied modern languages in Europe.

2. Where was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow born?

- A. Portland, Maine
- B. Massachusetts
- C. Revolutionary War hero
- D. Congress

3. What did Longfellow like to read as a child?

- A. Stories set in foreign places

B. Revolutionary War stories

C. Plays of Shakespeare

D. Poems about adversity

4. When did Longfellow decide to quit teaching to focus on poetry?

A. 1836

B. 1854

C. 1865

D. 1882

5. How was Longfellow's work received in London?

A. It was published by 24 different companies.

B. It was widely translated.

C. It was celebrated across the country.

D. It was admired by Lincoln, Dickens, and Baudelaire.

6. When did Longfellow pass away?

A. February 27, 1807

B. March 24, 1882

C. 1866

D. 58 years old

7. According to Walt Whitman, what kind of poet was Longfellow?

A. A poet of melancholy and courtesy

B. A poet of materialism

C. A poet of hard blows

D. A poet of women and young people

3. Can You Tell which Sentences are True and which are False?

1. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine.
2. Longfellow's poetry is only known in the United States.
3. Longfellow's mother was the daughter of a Revolutionary War hero.
4. Longfellow studied modern languages in Europe for three years.
5. Longfellow's first collection of poems was published when he was 32.
6. Longfellow's most important work was published after the Civil War.
7. Longfellow's poems were only popular in the English-speaking world.
8. Longfellow's seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated across the country.
9. Longfellow died in March 1882.

III The Greatest Poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Song of Hiawatha

The Song of Hiawatha is one of Longfellow's most successful poems. It portrays the Indians with sympathy and understanding.

According to the poem, Hiawatha was raised by his grandmother, Nokomis, and is able to talk to the animals of the forest. Surpassing all the other boys of his tribe in manly skills, Hiawatha grows up to be a leader of his people, marries the Indian maiden Minnehaha, and acts as a peacemaker among warring tribes. The Song of Hiawatha was inspired largely by Native American legends, with the hero's life based on a combination of legends rather than on one person in particular.

Read the text and fill in the articles a/the where necessary.

1. ____ song tells 2. ____ legend of how 3. ____ warrior *Mudjekeewis* became Father of 4. ____ Four Winds by slaying 5. ____ Great Bear of 6. ____ mountains, *Mishe-Mokwa*. His son 7. ____ Wabun, 8. ____ East Wind, falls in 9. ____ love with 10. ____ maiden whom he turns into 11. ____ Morning Star, Wabun-Annung. 12. ____ Wabun's brother, Kabibonokka, 13. ____ North Wind, bringer of 14. ____ autumn and winter, attacks 15. ____ Shingebis, "16. ____ diver". 17. ____ Shingebis repels him by burning 18. ____ firewood, and then in 19. ____ wrestling match. 20. ____ third

brother, Shawondasee, falls in 22. _____ love with 23. _____ dandelion, mistaking it for 24. _____ golden-haired maiden.

IV Summing up

Longfellow's immense popularity helped raise the status of poetry in his country, and he played an important part in bringing European cultural traditions to American audiences.