

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(1807-1882)

1. Read the text and fill in the missing words

People around the world know Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetry 1. _____ if they don't know 2. _____ wrote it. His poetry is recited to us in childhood, and lines from his poems 3. _____ us all through our lives. In the mid 1800's the Chinese government presented Longfellow with a **fan** inscribed 4. _____ his poem *The Psalm of Life*. His poems 5. _____ been translated 6. _____ dozens of languages.

2. Use the word in brackets in the correct form

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 7. _____ (born) in Portland, Maine 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 8. _____ (speak) Spanish, French and German in the Portland streets and liked stories 9. _____ (set) in foreign places: *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the plays of Shakespeare.

3. Choose from the sentences A-D the ones which fit each gap. There is one sentence you don't need.

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. 1. _____

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

When the Civil War ended in 1865, the poet was 58. 2. _____ 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. 3. _____

- C. Both books were very popular, but Longfellow's growing duties as a professor left him little time to write more.
- B. His most important work was finished, but his fame kept growing.
- A. 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.
- D. His works appealed to people of different social standards all over the country.

4. Answer the questions

1. What was Longfellow presented with in China?
2. What kind of a child was Henry Longfellow?
3. What poem did he devote to the life of Native Americans?
4. What proved that his popularity grew?
5. What did Walt Whitman think of Henry Longfellow as a poet?