

Comprehension Worksheet - Poem

Gathering Leaves

By *Robert Frost*

Spades take up leaves
No better than spoons,
And bags full of leaves
Are light as balloons.

I make a great noise
Of rustling all day
Like rabbit and deer
Running away.

But the mountains I raise
Elude my embrace,
Flowing over my arms
And into my face.

I may load and unload
Again and again
Till I fill the whole shed,
And what have I then?

Next to nothing for weight,
And since they grew duller
From contact with earth,
Next to nothing for color.

Next to nothing for use,
But a crop is a crop,
And who's to say where
The harvest shall stop?

Questions

1. Write a Summary of the poem.

2. How many stanzas are in this poem?

3. What is the tone and mood of this poem?

4. What is the rhyming scheme for the poem "Gathering Leaves"?

5. What figure of speech is expressed in the line "...*bags full of leaves are light as balloons*"?

6. Draw a picture of leaves being gathered.

Discussion Questions

7. Research and Discussion:
 - a. Name the seasons of nature.
 - b. What causes the leaves to fall from trees?
 - c. Why do leaves change colour?
8. Do you think the poet enjoys “gathering leaves”? What makes you think this?
9. Write a reflective essay on “gathering leaves” in your own backyard?
10. Write a reflection on the symbolism of the poem. (Advanced question)

Literal Questions

11. What is the poet's purpose in writing the poem?

12. What does the poet use to gather leaves?

13. Explain the use of the specific “sense” used in stanza two?

14. What do you think the simple task of gathering leaves can symbolize?

15. What happens when the poet tries to create a mountain of leaves?

16. What can the act of gathering leaves act as a metaphor for?

Answers for poem:

1. Summary of Robert Frost's poem "Gathering Leaves".

The poet describes the seasonal ritual of collecting fallen leaves. This activity reflects the cyclical nature of life as the speaker gathers leaves that have fallen from the trees. Through vivid imagery and sensory details, Frost captures the essence of autumn and the bittersweet beauty of decay.

2. This poem has six stanzas.

3. The tone is reflective and introspective and the mood is sombre and nostalgic.

4. The rhyming scheme for "Gathering Leaves" is abab cdce efef ghgh ijij klkl.

5. A simile

10. *Suggestion 1:* The flowing of leaves over the arms and face also symbolize the elusive challenges that we strive to overcome. Loading and unloading repeatedly, filling the shed with an endless cycle of leaves, mirrors the ceaseless efforts we make in life without clear resolution. The shedding of leaves recurs, reflecting the constant changes and burdens we bear, only to question at the end of it all - what do we truly gain from this repetitive cycle of gathering and unloading leaves?

Suggestion 2: Gathering leaves may seem like a trivial task. The act of collecting leaves highlights the theme of harvesting and abundance. It symbolizes the idea that every small effort contributes to a larger yield, underscoring the unpredictability of what may come from seemingly insignificant actions. Thus, the task of gathering leaves serves as a reminder that even the smallest contributions can lead to unexpected rewards.

11. Robert Frost's poem "Gathering Leaves" serves the purpose of capturing the essence of nature and the changing seasons. Frost does this by conveying the beauty and peace of fall as leaves start to fall from the trees. He then shows how collecting fallen leaves can connect someone to the natural world.

12. He uses a spade.

13. The poet is using the sense of hearing in stanza two. It is with this sense that he uses to bring forth to explain the symphony of sounds and sensation. A rustling noise is created by the movement of the leaves; for which it is compared to a chorus of rabbits and deer scampering away.

14. Gathering leaves may seem like a simple task, yet it holds a profound reflection of life's repetitive nature.

15. The mountains "raised" by the leaves elude capture, flowing over arms and into his face.

16. The act of gathering leaves becomes can be a metaphor for embracing change and accepting the inevitability of endings.