

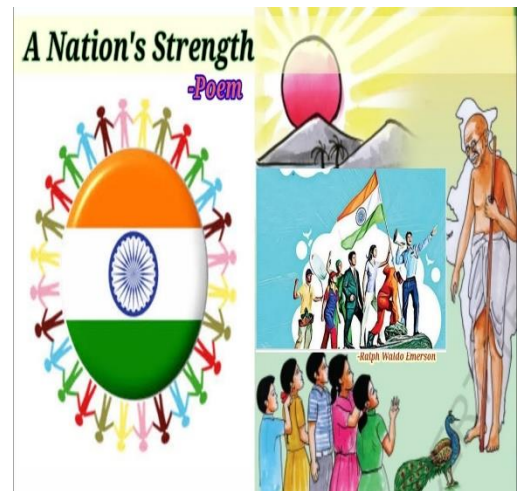


INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: Grade VIII	Department: ENGLISH	Date of submission: October 2023
Worksheet No:23	Topic: A Nation's Strength (Poem)	Note: Notebook Work

Theme

In Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem, A Nation's Strength, the poet uses vivid imagery and metaphors to convince the reader that the strength of a nation, is not in its wealth or military prowess, but its people. The main theme of this poem is the strength of nations. Specifically, the poet is interested in analyzing and describing how and why some nations maintain their strength and endure the passage of time while others do not. He poses a few reasons why a country might endure before settling on, what he says is the main reason—the people/leaders they have. Without the strength of the people a nation has no foundation and is doomed to collapse.



Q1. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the things that, according to the poet, do not make a nation strong?

Ans. Things like gold, crown, pride, silver, other riches, swords, grand kingdoms, etc. does not make a nation strong.

2. What do a nation's foes do?

Ans. A nation's foes attack the nation and hamper its progress.

3. What can happen to a nation's pride?

Ans. A nation's pride can quickly lose its sheen if God so wills it. An act of nature can also destroy monuments, towns and places of natural beauty.

4. What are the qualities that make a nation strong?

Ans. The brave men of the nation who work hard while others sleep, make the nation strong. The people who can stand by truth and honesty and who can suffer long for these great virtues can make their country great and strong. In other words, determined people with the right attitude make a nation strong.

5. State the rhyme scheme used in the poem.

Ans. The rhyme scheme used in the poem is *ababcdcd...*, where alternate lines rhyme.

Q2. Answer these questions with reference to the context:

1. *“The blood has turned their stones to rust,
Their glory to decay.”*

a. Whose blood does the line refer to?

Ans a. The blood of the Empires is mentioned in the lines.

b. What does the phrase ‘turned their stones to rust’ refer to?

Ans b. Stones refer to the stones used to build those empires. Rust is referred to as something that has become too old and no more cared about.

c. Whose ‘glory’ has diminished?

Ans c. The glory of the huge empires and their wealth has diminished.

2. *“They build a nation’s pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.”*

a. Who is ‘they’ in the above line?

Ans a. 'They' refers to brave men of a country.

b. How are the nation’s pillars built deep?

Ans b. The nation's pillars are built deep with the efforts and sacrifices of great men.

c. How are a nation’s pillars lifted to the sky?

Ans c. A nation’s pillars are lifted to the sky because they have deep foundations built on the solid ground of bravery and honor.

Q3. Think and answer

1. Who are the real enemies of a nation? Do these enemies reside in a country or outside?

Ans1. The real enemies of a nation are those who hinder its development. The people who are always criticizing about the country without contributing to its development are the foes. The actual enemies of a nation are people who run away from danger, don't defend the country or work hard. These real enemies reside within the country.

2. Why are wealth, pride and war not enough to make a country strong?

Ans2. According to the speaker, wealth, gold, silver, etc. cannot provide a strong base to a nation. The foundation made on the basis of wealth is like one made on sinking sand. No matter how wealthy a nation is, war will destroy it. There have been many such empires in the past that were wealthy, but were defeated and disappeared. Pride doesn't lie in wearing glittering crown. This will soon be reduced to ashes. Only strong brave men who can fight the enemies and sacrifice themselves will make a country strong.

Poetic Devices in the Poem:

1. **Rhetorical question** is a question asked in order to create a dramatic effect or to make a point rather than to get an answer.

Examples: what makes a nation's pillars high and its foundations strong? / What makes it mighty to defy / The foes that round it throng?"

2. **Metonymy:** Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one object or idea takes the place of another with which it has a close association. In fact, metonymy means "**change of name.**" As a literary device, it is a way of replacing an object or idea with something related to it instead of stating what is actually meant.

Examples:

It is not gold (The word 'gold' signifies the wealth and grandeur of a nation)

Is it the sword? (The word 'sword' refers to a nation's military prowess)

3. **Metaphor:** The first metaphor employed in the poem appears in the first stanza, particularly in the first line of the poem. The word "pillars" creates the metaphor of a building; the poet associates a nation with a building which needs to have a strong foundation in order to not to collapse.

4. Symbols: In the poem, several elements symbolize the decay of past nations. For instance, the “sword” symbolizes war and the thirst for blood. History has witnessed many nations that fought only for the sake of conquering others and destroying; eventually, those warrior nations have disappeared for good, turning “their glory to decay”.

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