



Name: _____ Class: _____

Ozymandias

By Percy Bysshe Shelley
1818

Percy Bysshe Shelley, who lived from 1792-1822, was an important poet during a literary and artistic period that's known as the era of English Romanticism. He is regarded by some as one of the most influential poets in the English language. Ozymandias is one of his best-known works. As you read, take notes on contrasting images in the poem.

- [1] I met a traveller from an antique¹ land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage² lies, whose frown,
[5] And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless
things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that
fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
[10] 'My name is Ozymandias,³ king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal⁴ wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."



"Ramesseum in Egypt. The Ozymandias Colossus:" by Christopher Michel is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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1. ancient
2. **Visage (noun):** a person's face, with reference to their expression
3. Ozymandias is another name for the pharaoh Ramses II who ruled Ancient Egypt from 1279-1213 BC.
4. **Colossal (adjective):** extremely large

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement best expresses the theme of this poem?
 - A. Ancient ruins are an important part of history.
 - B. People are easily corrupted by pride.
 - C. Be wary of the stories travelers tell.
 - D. Power and greatness will not last forever.

2. PART B: Which section from the text best develops the theme identified in PART A?
 - A. "I met a traveller from an antique land / Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert...'" (Lines 1-3)
 - B. "And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, / Tell that its sculptor well those passions read / Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things," (Lines 5-7)
 - C. "And on the pedestal these words appear: / My name is Ozymandias, king of kings" (Lines 9-10)
 - D. "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! / Nothing beside remains. Round the decay" (Lines 11-12)

3. What is the effect of the speaker hearing about this statue from someone else as opposed to seeing it with his own eyes?
 - A. It helps emphasize how the story has been passed on and the reader should doubt the reliability of the description.
 - B. It emphasizes how powerful the king was and how much his legend continues to impact culture.
 - C. It helps emphasize how the story is a tale that is being passed on to the reader, indicating that there is a message to be heeded.
 - D. It demonstrates the speaker's own susceptibility to the influence of others.

4. For what purpose did the author include the inscription on the statue, "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" (Line 11)?
 - A. It lets the reader know that Ozymandias was a cruel leader.
 - B. It emphasizes the contrast between the king's arrogance and the ruin his statue has become.
 - C. It demonstrates the negative attitude the sculptor had about the king.
 - D. It compares Ozymandias to other famous kings by alluding to a classic Arthurian legend.

5. How does the author use irony to develop the theme of the poem? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.
