

Analyze Author's Techniques, including Figurative Language

POEM: He Had His Dream
By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Poetry Assessment
This text is in the public domain.

He had his dream, and all through life,
Worked up to it through toil and strife.
Afloat fore'er before his eyes,
It colored for him all his skies:
The storm-cloud dark
Above his bark,
The calm and listless vault of blue
Took on its hopeful hue,
It tintured every passing beam--
He had his dream.

He labored hard and failed at last,
His sails too weak to bear the blast,
The raging tempests tore away
And sent his beating bark astray.
But what cared he
For wind or sea!
He said, "The tempest will be short,
My bark will come to port."
He saw through every cloud a gleam--
He had his dream.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Why does the poet keep saying “He had his dream”?

- a. to have a rhyme
- b. to emphasize a theme
- c. to tell what the man thought
- d. to explain what happened

2. Why does the poet say “storm-cloud dark”?

- a. The man was sad.
- b. The sky was cloudy.
- c. The man faced problems.
- d. The man was worried.

3. What does it mean when the poet says “He saw through every cloud a gleam”?

- a. He was discouraged.
- b. He was patient.
- c. He had hope.
- d. He would have more problems.

4. Why does the poet write about difficulties?

- a. to show that hard work can fail
- b. to help people think about problems
- c. to discourage people from changing
- d. to encourage people to try

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What do you think the poet wants you to learn from the poem?

Why do you think so?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students’ Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student’s achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	c	c	d

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Answers should relate to resilience or determination or hope.