

UNIT 14

THE PATRIOT

Robert Browning (1812-1889)

Students Learning Outcomes:

On completion of the unit, students will be able to:

- answer comprehension questions.
- write summary of the poem.
- use future continuous, future perfect and future perfect continuous tenses.
- write and practice dialogues.

Pre-reading:

- How the faith in God keeps alive hope in our mind?

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,

At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
“Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?”—God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

About the Author

Robert Browning was an English poet and playwright of the Victorian age. He was widely recognized as a master of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. The study of human mind and soul is Browning's dominant interest in the writing of poetry. His other famous poems are:

'My Last Duchess', 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' and 'The Last Ride Together'. He is a robust optimist. He has also written 'Divine' poems.



About the Poem

'The Patriot' is a brilliant piece of dramatic verse. It deals with the fickleness of public opinion and hero worship. The same people who lift you up to the skies will also fall you down into the ditch.

The speaker of the poem is a patriot. He thinks of his glorious past. A year ago he was given a grand welcome on his arrival to the town.

But everything has changed now. The patriot is being taken to the scaffold for all his 'misdeeds'. People are throwing stones at him. What an ill-fate to a man who spent all his life for his countrymen! The patriot is optimist. He hopes that since he did not receive his reward in this world, he will be rewarded in the world hereafter.

Reading and Thinking Skills:

1. Answer the following questions.

- i) How did the countrymen welcome their hero at the beginning?
- ii) How was the patriot's arrival announced?
- iii) Why did the public change their attitude?
- iv) "Good folk, mere noise repels, But give me your sun from yonder skies!" What do you infer from these lines?
- v) Do you think the poet is optimist? Give reasons in support of your answer.
- vi) How was the patriot being taken to the scaffold?
- vii) How was he treated this time?
- viii) Why was the patriot bleeding?
- ix) Where will the patriot be rewarded?

2. Choose the correct answer.

- i) The speaker in the poem thinks
 - (a) of his glorious past.
 - (b) about his family.
 - (c) about his friends.
 - (d) nothing.
- ii) How does the patriot know that his forehead bleeds?
 - (a) he touches his forehead.
 - (b) he can see the blood running down.
 - (c) by the feel.
 - (d) someone has told him.
- iii) When the patriot was unpopular, how did the people react?
 - (a) whoever had mind, hit him with stones.
 - (b) they showed no reaction.
 - (c) they still loved him.
 - (d) they scattered roses on his way.
- iv) A year ago, he was given
 - (a) a grand welcome on his arrival.
 - (b) a grand welcome on his departure.
 - (c) a grand welcome on his marriage.
 - (d) a grand welcome at his office.

v) The house roofs were full of people who

- (a) wanted to play with him.
- (b) wanted to invite him.
- (c) wanted to go with him.
- (d) wanted to have a look at him.

vi) But everything has

- (a) been sold now.
- (b) changed now.
- (c) purchased now.
- (d) burnt now.

vii) There is nobody on

- (a) the mountains now.
- (b) the trees now.
- (c) the house-tops now.
- (d) the tables now.

3. Re-read the poem and write down the missing words in each line.

- i) The air broke into a mist with _____
 - (a) shells. (b) bells.
 - (c) wells. (d) smell.
- ii) Alack, it was I who leaped at the _____
 - (a) run. (b) fun.
 - (c) sun. (d) hen.
- iii) I go in the rain, and, more than _____
 - (a) breeds. (b) needs.
 - (c) feed. (d) read.
- iv) Thus I entered, and thus I _____
 - (a) go. (b) owe.
 - (c) blow. (d) flow.
- v) Just a palsied few at the windows _____
 - (a) yet. (b) set.
 - (c) let. (d) met.
- vi) With myrtle mixed in my path like _____
 - (a) mad.
 - (b) sad.
 - (c) bad.
 - (d) dad.

- vii) A year ago on this very _____
(a) play
(b) slay
(c) day
(d) may
- viii) To give it my loving friends to _____
(a) peep!
(b) sheep!
(c) leap!
(d) keep!
- ix) This very day, now a year is _____
(a) fun.
(b) turn.
(c) run.
(d) learn.
- x) 'Tis God shall repay: I am safer _____
(a) so.
(b) no.
(c) know.
(d) low.

Critical Thinking:

- Why should we be loyal to our country?

Writing Skills:

Activities

- What is the main theme of the poem?
- Paraphrase the first three stanzas of the poem.
- Write down summary of the poem.

Research Project

Write a research report on the achievements of any one of the greatest scientists of Pakistan.

Grammar:

1. Future continuous tense

We can use the future continuous to say that something will be going on at a certain time in the future.

Example

This time tomorrow, I will be playing hockey.

2. Future perfect

We can use the future perfect to say that something will have been completed by a certain time in the future.

Example

The builder says, “He will have finished the roof by Saturday”.

3. Future perfect continuous

It indicates an action a part of which will be completed at some point in future and the rest will be continuous.

Example

They'll have been doing this work for three days tomorrow.

Activity:

For each sentence, put one of the verbs in bracket in the simple future and the other in the future continuous tense.

- i) Nazish (attend) the party tonight. She (wear) her new dress.
- ii) My friend (arrive) by plane at five o'clock. I (wait) for him at the airport.
- iii) I (be) back in half an hour. You (stay) until then.
- iv) I (not be) awake when you leave in the morning. I (sleep).
- v) Hira (be) at home the whole morning. She (help) her mother with the cleaning of the house.

Oral Communication Skills:

- i) Write dialogues showing offer and respond to greetings, compliments, invitations, introductions and farewells.
- ii) Practise the same dialogues in the class in pairs.