

UNIT 3

A PSALM OF LIFE

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

Students Learning Outcomes:

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

- answer the comprehension questions.
- apply critical thinking to explore the poem and poet's point of view.
- write summary of the poem.
- write a general paragraph.
- collect information about the given research project.
- analyze the figure of speech (simile, metaphor, imagery)
- use convention and dynamics of group discussion.

Pre-reading:

- How is word 'Psalm' pronounced?
- Name some of the great religious personalities in history and discuss their impact on their fellow citizens.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream! —
For the soul is dead that **slumbers**,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal ;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the **bivouac** of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
Be a hero in the strife !

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant !
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act,— act in the living Present !
Heart within, and God o'erhead !

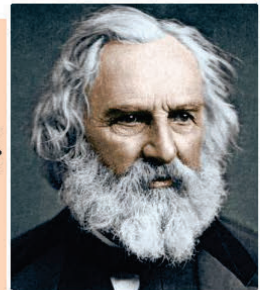
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives **sublime**,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time ;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A **forlorn** and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

About the Author

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a U.S poet. He was the author of Evangeline, the song of Hiawatha. A Psalm of Life is among his didactic and moralistic poems.



Reading and Thinking Skills:

1. Answer the following questions.

- i) What is the theme of the poem?
- ii) *"Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!"*
What do these lines suggest?
- iii) Why should we read the biographies of great personalities?
- iv) Which personality has inspired you and how?
- v) What is importance of patience in achieving goals?
- vi) Why are great men remembered even after their death?

2. Choose the correct answer.

- i) 'Psalm' means
 - (a) a sacred song or poem.
 - (b) biography of a person.
 - (c) a musical song.
 - (d) a ballad.
- ii) The poet says 'life' is
 - (a) a dream.
 - (b) real and earnest.
 - (c) enjoyment.
 - (d) full of tears.
- iii) The poem has been written by
 - (a) William Blake.
 - (b) S.T. Coleridge.
 - (c) H.W. Longfellow.
 - (d) Emily Bronte.
- iv) We should live in
 - (a) present.
 - (b) future.
 - (c) past.
 - (d) dreams.
- v) Patience brings
 - (a) bad fruit.
 - (b) tasty fruit.

- (c) rotten fruit.
- (d) sweet fruit.
- vi) The poet says, 'life is indeed real and death is:
 - (a) not the goal of life."
 - (b) the goal of life."
 - (c) end of time."
 - (d) the goal of man."
- vii) Great people leave their footprints on
 - (a) the sands of desert.
 - (b) the sands of plains.
 - (c) the sands of time.
 - (d) the sands of rivers.
- viii) We may take lesson from
 - (a) the death.
 - (b) the hardships.
 - (c) the hardwork.
 - (d) the achievements of great men.
- ix) The poem provides advice and counsel
 - (a) to weak men.
 - (b) to young men.
 - (c) to old men.
 - (d) to children.
- x) We should not lose heart in
 - (a) the time of happiness.
 - (b) the time of victory.
 - (c) the time of crises.
 - (d) the time of speaking.

3. Mark the sentences as True or False.

- i) Art is long and time is fleeting. (T/F)
- ii) We should have trust in future. (T/F)
- iii) Learn to labour and to wait. (T/F)
- iv) We should act in the present. (T/F)
- v) A person may die but good deeds remain forever. (T/F)
- vi) Patience has no importance in life. (T/F)

- vii) We should be optimists. (T/F)
- viii) Death is not the end of life. (T/F)
- ix) Life is the name of ups and downs. (T/F)
- x) Life is the name of setting examples for others. (T/F)

Critical Thinking:

- Do you agree/disagree with the poet's point of view?
- How can one live forever in the hearts of people?

Writing Skills:

- i) Paraphrase all the stanzas of the poem.
- ii) Write down a summary of the poem.
- iii) Write about 200-250 words on the life of our “Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ”, telling how he brought the greatest revolution in the world.

Research Project

Go through the biographies of some famous personalities and select the one you like the most and write down the reasons for your liking. (About 300 words)

Vocabulary:

- Simile:** It consists of comparing two things of different kinds resembling at least in one point. In 'simile' 'like' or 'as' is used to make comparison. e.g. As brave as a lion.
- Metaphor:** An expression which describes a person or object in a literary way by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to the person or object you are trying to describe.
For example: Asim is the tiger of our class.
- Imagery:** The use of words or pictures in books, films, painting etc to describe ideas or situations.
For example: I love the scent of peaches.

Activity:

Here is a list of few similes, metaphor and imageries. Can you identify them? Write “S” for simile, “M” for metaphor and “I” for imagery. The first has been solved for you.

i)	I wandered lonely as a cloud.	S
ii)	As obstinate as a mule.	_____
iii)	Hope is the poor man's bread.	_____
iv)	The Camel is the ship of desert.	_____
v)	He is the apple of his father's eyes.	_____
vi)	He ate sweet and juicy mangoes.	_____
vii)	Death lays his icy hands on kings.	_____
viii)	The rustling of leaves is a kind of music for me.	_____
ix)	Revenge is a kind of wild justice.	_____
x)	Infancy is the dawn of life.	_____
xi)	How far that little candle throws its beam! So, shines a good deed in a naughty world.	_____
xii)	I saw huge trees in the thick and dark forest.	_____

Oral Communication Skills:

Activity:

Discuss in groups the theme of the poem and its appeal to an ordinary man.

Guidelines for group-discussion

- Present and explain your point of view clearly.
- Support or modify your opinions with reasons.
- Agree and disagree politely.
- Summarize the main points of discussion for the benefit of the whole group.