

The Shadow

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

--*Robert Lewis Stevenson*

Questions:

Research and Discussion Questions

1. How and why do you cast a shadow?
2. When is a shadow long and when is it short?
3. List three words that describe your hidden identity?
4. List three words that describe your identity according to how people see you?

Multiple Choice Questions

5. What is this poem about?
 - a. A boy
 - b. A nurse
 - c. A shadow
 - d. A rubber band
6. With whom does the shadow go?
 - a. The shadow goes about with a little boy.
 - b. The shadow goes about with the nursie.
 - c. The shadow goes about with no one in particular.
7. Does the shadow know how children play?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. To what is the shadow compared?
 - a. To a rubber ball
 - b. To a rubber band
 - c. To an Indian man
 - d. To an elastic
9. When the boy jumps into his bed, what does the shadow do?
 - a. The shadow goes away.
 - b. The shadow jumps into bed also.
 - c. The shadow stays by his bed.
 - d. The shadow goes to sleep.
10. The shadow does NOT grow like _____?
 - a. The sun
 - b. A rubber ball
 - c. The river
 - d. A proper children
11. The poet thinks the shadow is _____?
 - a. friendly
 - b. curious
 - c. a coward
 - d. brave

12. Why did the shadow not accompany the boy in the last stanza?
- a. The boy separated from his shadow.
 - b. The boy left too early in the morning, before the sun rose.
 - c. The shadow was tired of following the boy.

13. Stanza three has examples of _____.
- a. Metaphors
 - b. Personifications
 - c. Alliterations
 - d. Similes

More questions

14. How does the boy feel about the shadow?

15. What is unique about the shadow's growth?

16. What is the rhyming scheme for this poem? _____

17. What is the purpose of this poem?

18. What is the tone of the poem?

19. What does the poet want the reader to think about in the last stanza?

20. Circle the words that rhyme in the poem.

21. Do you like this poem? Why?

Visual activity:

22. Use the poem to draw a picture of a boy and his shadow.