



OZYMANDIAS

Percy Bysshe Shelley

People worth knowing:

WRITTEN BY:

Percy Bysshe Shelley
(1792 – 1822)

- Born in England.
- Poems exemplify English **Romanticism**: joyous ecstasy and brooding despair.
- Started writing at 17. Died when he drowned at age 29.



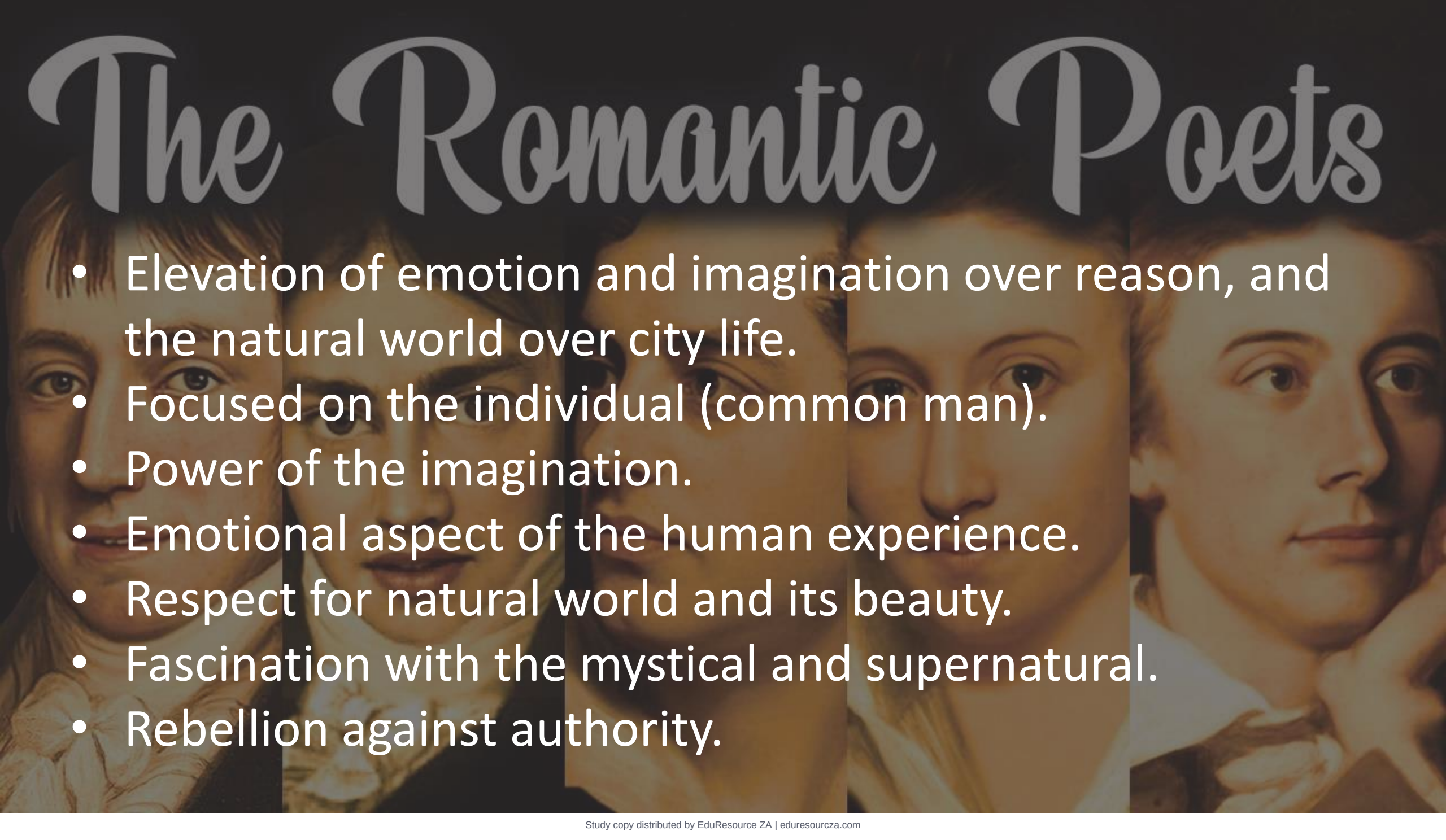
WRITTEN ABOUT:

Ozymandias
(1303 – 1213 BCE)
(Greek name for Ramses II)

- Egyptian Pharaoh during their Golden Age.
- Erected more monuments and sired more children than any other Egyptian pharaoh.
- Reigned for 66 years.
- “Ruler of rulers”.



The Romantic Poets



- Elevation of emotion and imagination over reason, and the natural world over city life.
- Focused on the individual (common man).
- Power of the imagination.
- Emotional aspect of the human experience.
- Respect for natural world and its beauty.
- Fascination with the mystical and supernatural.
- Rebellion against authority.



Pronoun: Speaker is not the traveller. *Why would the poet choose this, instead of having the speaker tell the story?*

Diction: consider the link to the historical context. *Why the choice of antique? Why not “ancient”?*

Sibilance: *Effect? Tone? To reflect setting?*

Caesura: *why?*

Colon: indicates that **everything** that follows is said by the traveller, not the speaker.

I met a traveller from an antique land

Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown



Diction: consider the words used to describe the statue. Focus here is on the size and ruin.



Enjambment. *Why? Consider “frown” in relation to diction which follows.*

Diction: descriptions of the expression on the statue's face. *What impression is created of Ozymandias?*

Alliteration:
impact of the hard "c" sound here?

Description of statue ends. Description of sculptor follows. **Ekphrasis:** written description of a form of visual art for literary effect. *What is the literary effect here?*

Sibilance: effect?
Continuation of previous stanza?

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamp'd on the lifeless things,

The hand that mock'd them, and the heart that fed;

Caesura: why?

Antithesis: how does this support the talent of the artist?

Pun: "mock" as in to copy; "mock" as in to make fun of or criticize.
Impression of the sculptor?

Ambiguity: the heart of Ozymandias fed his passions, which are seen in the sculpture OR the heart of the sculptor, which feeds his ability to capture the passions so well.

Refers to diction describing personality of Ozymandias. The sculptor "read" the passions "well". *What does this tell you about the sculptor?*

Colon:

indicates that the inscription on the sculpture will follow. *To what extent do you consider these words to be an **epitaph**?*

And on a pedestal these words appear:

“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”

Pronoun: first person perspective of Ozymandias (direct speech). *What would the **tone** of these words be? How does the **exclamation mark** contribute to the tone?*

Simple sentence: *why?*

*How does the **caesura** support this?*

Diction: description of the statue vs description of desert sands. *Impact?*

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Alliteration of hard and short sound “b” + **alliteration** of soft and long sound “l” = **sibilance** = ? *Hint: think of the environment...*

*Given the ending of the poem, how is the statue's inscription **ironic**?*

What is the poem's message about power? Take into account man, art and nature.

FORM and STRUCTURE

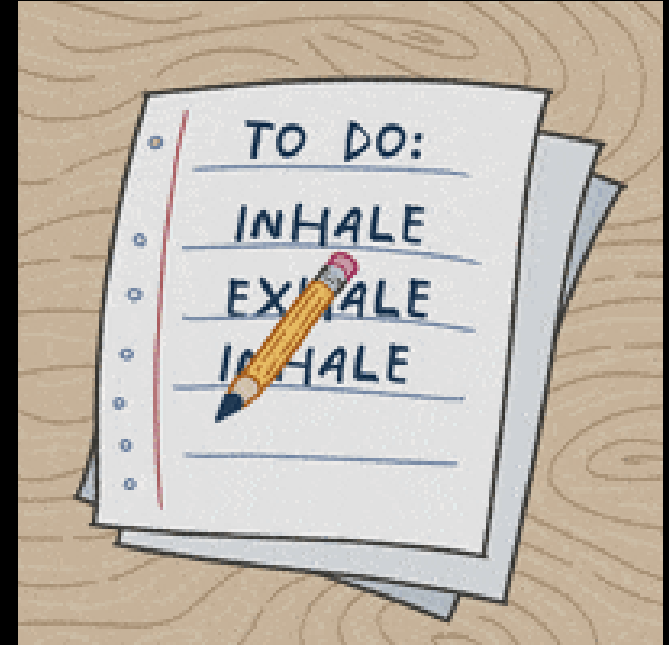
SONNET: 14 lines **BUT** plays with the form:

- **Petrarchan structure** – octave and sestet... mostly. Division of focus – volta?
- **Shakespearian rhyme scheme** – deviate from rhyme scheme. No couplets. Uses use of slant rhyme (similar, but not perfect).
- **Iambic pentameter**...mostly. The stress to have the stress on the 10th syllable. (switches on) and spondee (two consecutive syllables). “two vast”).



Just breathe...

The goal is to give you to vocab to explain that, in short: the poet plays with the pentameter to disrupt the rhythm (in the same way that he disrupts the rhyme scheme and the plays with the sonnet form).



This is an important aspect of the poem, so why would the poet do this?



Consider this image from a graphic interpretation of the poem.

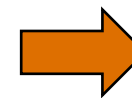
Discuss how the **composition** and **visual details** of the image support the **tone** evident in lines 10 and 11 of the poem.



Now consider the image which follows in the text.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the **contrast** with the previous image. By making specific reference to **visual details**, explain how this image supports the **message** of the poem.

To read the whole graphic of the poem, ctrl + click here:



<https://www.zenpencils.com/comic/ozymandias/>