

Yesterday you read Robert Louis Stevenson's poem 'My Shadow'.

Answer the questions about the poem below.

Don't worry if you can't print the question sheet out - write your answers in your book instead!

My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson

1. Who is 'he' in the poem?

2. What do we call the device we use to give human characteristics to something that isn't human? Can you find two examples of this in the poem?

3. How many rhyming couplets are there in the poem?

4. Why is the way the shadow grows 'not at all like proper children'?

5. Use the text to help explain what a coward is. How do you know?

6. Who does the boy mean when using the word 'nursie'?

7. Does the language in the poem indicate that this is an old or modern poem? Give two examples to back up your answer.

8. In the final verse, which line gives the scientific reason as to why the boy can't see his shadow when he goes outside? Explain your choice.

The answers to the questions are on the next page.

Don't peek at them until you have answered all of the questions!

My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson

Answers

1. Who is 'he' in the poem?

'He' is the narrator's shadow.

2. What do we call the device we use to give human characteristics to something that isn't human? Can you find two examples of this in the poem?

The device we use to give human characteristics to something that isn't human is called personification.

Answer may include:

'He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;'

'And I see him jump before me...'

'The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow'

'For he sometimes shoots up taller...'

'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,'

'...can only make a fool of me...'

'He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;'

'...like an arrant sleepy-head,'

'Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.'

3. How many rhyming couplets are there in the poem?

There are eight rhyming couplets in the poem.

4. Why is the way the shadow grows 'not at all like proper children'?

The way the shadow grows is not like proper children because proper children grow very slowly, whereas the shadow sometimes 'shoots up taller' or 'gets so little that there's none of him at all'. This is because when

the sun is high in the sky, your shadow appears shorter and when the sun is low in the sky, your shadow is longer.

5. Use the text to help explain what a coward is. How do you know?

A coward is someone who lacks courage. We know this because the shadow stays close beside the child, who says they'd think "shame" to stick to their nurse (childminder or guardian) in the same way.

6. Who does the narrator mean when using the word 'nursie'?

The narrator means someone who takes care of a child, like a nanny or a babysitter.

7. Does the language in the poem indicate that this is an old or modern poem? Give two examples to back up your answer.

Various answers which suggest that the language is old rather than modern, e.g. words such as notion, arrant, ought and nursie indicate that the poem is old as these words aren't commonly used today.

8. In the final verse, which line gives the scientific reason as to why the narrator can't see their shadow when they go outside? Explain your choice.

'One morning, very early, before the sun was up,'

The narrator couldn't see their shadow because it was still dark, leading them to believe that the lazy shadow had stayed in bed.