

Finish this
well known
phrase:

"Time flies
when . . ."



LESSON 4 - AS IMPERCEPTIBLY AS GRIEF

EMILY DICKINSON

1. Learning Outcomes

1. You will be able to explain what the poem is about
2. You will be able to comment on the themes and ideas in the poem
3. You will show your understanding of the context of the poem.
4. You will analyse the language and structure of the poem
5. You will discuss your personal response to the poem.

IS TIME ON YOUR SIDE? FRIEND OR FOE?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHVeyo4W18U>
MICK JAGGER THOUGHT SO, DO YOU????

What do these images show you about the passing of time?



IMAGINE . . .

You are stuck at home for the whole of the summer holidays. You cannot leave the house. All you can do is look out of the window.



What sort of things would you notice that you probably don't notice now?

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

Birthplace: Amherst, Massachusetts

She was born and lived in 'Homestead'
Main Street for all but 15 years of her life.

She spent a lot of time writing in her
bedroom and actually
rarely ever went out
after 1865.



EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

Although Emily Dickinson's calling as a poet began in her teen years, she came into her own as an artist during a short but intense period of creativity that resulted in her composing, revising, and saving **hundreds** of poems.

That period, which scholars identify as 1858-1865, overlaps with the most significant event of American nineteenth-century history, the Civil War.



WAS SHE A ROMANTIC POET?

- ◉ **Emily Dickinson** wrote at the tail end of the **Romantic** period, and even though she was influenced by some of the ideals of **Romanticism**, is most commonly known as a **writer** from the Realist era. However, her writing embodies the defining characteristics that are identified with each period.
- ◉ American Romanticism
- ◉ Throughout Romanticism, nature was thought to be a source of instruction, delight, and a way to quench man's thirst for knowledge and understanding. Writers connected back to their literal "roots", finding inspiration and wisdom in nature. They often wrote about the contrast between the pleasant simplicity of nature and the unnatural constraints of society. Each of these periods.

WORD SEARCH

You have 5 minutes on your table to look up the meanings for the following words:

- ◉ Imperceptible
- ◉ Lapsed
- ◉ Perfidy
- ◉ Distilled
- ◉ Sequestered
- ◉ Courteous
- ◉ Harrowing

Use your
phone

WORD SEARCH

- ⦿ **Imperceptible** – slight/subtle – hardly noticeable
- ⦿ **Lapsed** – not valid / expired / out of date
- ⦿ **Perfidy** – being deceitful and untrustworthy
- ⦿ **Distilled** – heated to extract something
- ⦿ **Sequestered** – isolated / hidden away
- ⦿ **Courteous** – polite and respectful
- ⦿ **Harrowing** – really distressing

WORD ASSOCIATION

Summer



Winter



THE POEM

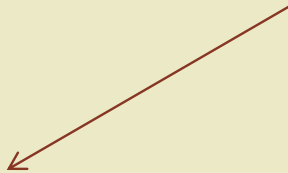
Read the poem
and try to identify
some of the
comparisons that
Dickinson is
making.

Summer / grief

Dusk / end of day
like a guest who is
leaving

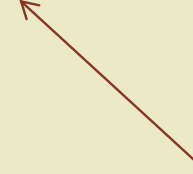
End of summer like
death

Why does she
compare the passing
of summer to the
passing of grief?



What does she feel
about the ending of
the summer?

As imperceptibly as **grief**
The summer lapsed away, –
Too imperceptible, at last,
To seem like perfidy.



Do you ever feel like
time has tricked you?

Does Dickinson feel that
time has been deceitful
to her?

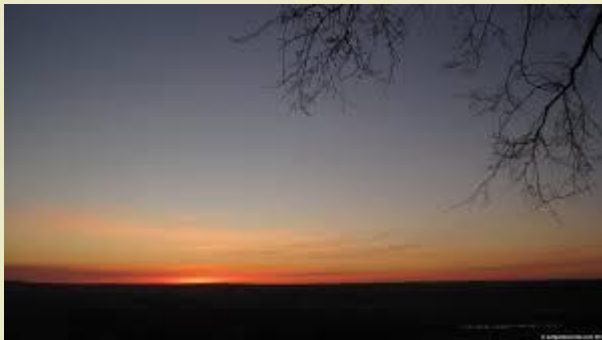
What happens as
summer passes?

Why is it becoming
quieter?

A quietness distilled,
As twilight long begun,
Or Nature, spending with
herself
Sequestered afternoon.

If twilight is “long begun”
what does that tell us
about it? Why does
Dickinson link this to the
quietness?

What technique is this?
How does it present
Nature?



What time of
year does this
happen?

Why is 'foreign' used
here?

Is it usually shiny on
winter mornings?

The dusk drew earlier in,
The morning **foreign** shone, –
A courteous, yet **harrowing** grace,
As **guest who would be gone**.

Sometimes good comes out
of something really difficult.

Can you think of a good
example?

This is an oxymoron.
Grace = an undeserved
gift, it is a positive image.
Harrowing is something
really distressing.

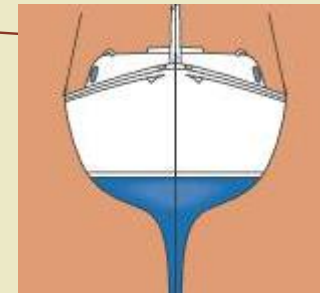
**What is Dickinson saying
about the passing of the
summer?**

For a reclusive person like Dickinson, visitors
provided a lifeline to the world. Here she is
describing the guest who is trying to leave
but is too polite to just go.

Why doesn't
summer need a
'wing' or a 'keel'?



And thus, without a **wing**,
Or service of a **keel**,
Our summer made her **light escape**
Into the **beautiful**.



Where has
summer
gone?

What does this
suggest about
the summer?

CHANGING MOOD

Stanza 1

“grief”

“perfidy”

Stanza 4

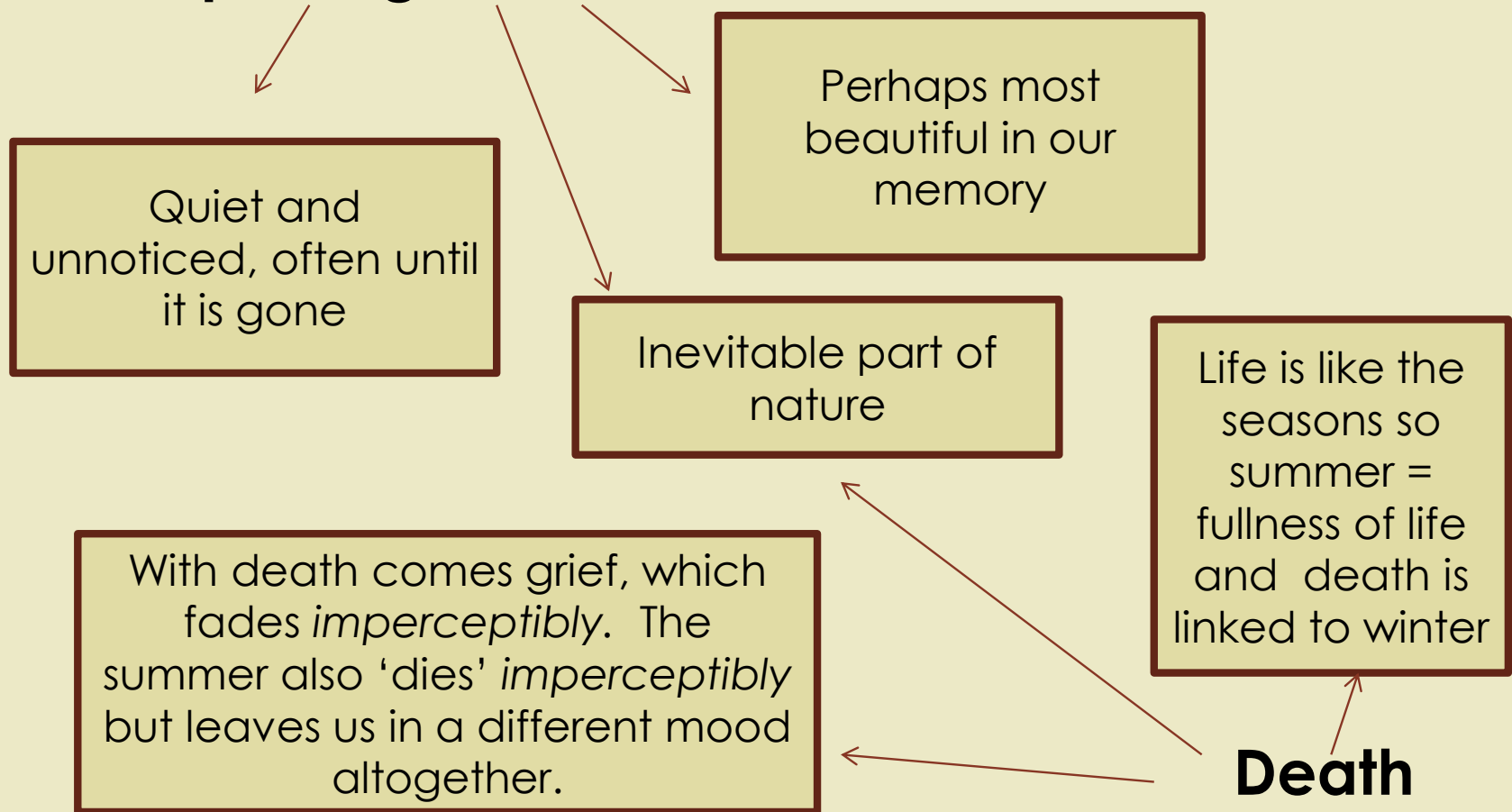
“light escape”

“beautiful”

How has the tone changed over the poem?
How does the poet feel about the end of
summer by the end of the poem?

THEME

The passage of time.



Death

RESPOND

How does Emily Dickinson present the theme of **time** in the poem 'As Imperceptibly as Grief'?

- ◉ Write about what Dickinson is saying about time.
- ◉ Write about how Dickinson uses language and structure to present her ideas about time.
- ◉ Write about how Dickinson's own experiences might have influenced her ideas about time.