

# Before You Read

## The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

### LITERARY FOCUS: METER

**Meter** is a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. Meter gives poetry rhythm. You can hear the meter of a poem when you read it aloud. Stressed syllables are emphasized more than unstressed syllables.

Analyzing the meter of a poem is called **scanning**. You can use special marks to scan a poem. The stress mark ( ' ) is placed over each stressed syllable. The "short" mark ( ~ ) is placed over each unstressed syllable. Read aloud this line from "The Tides Rises, the Tide Falls," emphasizing the syllables marked with a " ' " symbol.

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /  
Along / the sea- / sands damp / and brown

**Why Does Meter Matter?** Think of a line from a poem or song. Write it in the space below. Read the line aloud several times, marking the stressed syllables with a " ' " symbol and the unstressed syllables with a "~." Then, use your symbols to read the line aloud once more, emphasizing the meter.

Example: Happy birthday to you.

### READING SKILLS: PARAPHRASING

One way to better understand the meaning of a text is to **paraphrase**, or restate its ideas in your own words. Here is an example of how a line from "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls" can be paraphrased.

Original Line	Possible Paraphrase
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls	Night is falling. A shorebird cries out.

**Use the Skill** As you read the poem, pause after each stanza. Paraphrase each line in the stanza, using your own words. Your paraphrase should include the important details expressed in each stanza.



**Literary Skills**  
Understand meter.

**Reading Skills**  
Paraphrase to clarify text.

# The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

## IDENTIFY

Scan the **meter** of lines 1–5. Mark stressed syllables with (ˈ) and unstressed syllables with (˘).

## ANALYZE

Circle the title of the poem each time it appears. In what way does its **rhythm** help convey meaning?

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## FLUENCY

Read the boxed stanza aloud. Pause only when you come to a semicolon or comma. Read once to emphasize the **meter**. Then read again to emphasize meaning and **mood**.

The tide rises, the tide falls,  
The twilight darkens, the curlew<sup>1</sup> calls;  
Along the sea-sands damp and brown  
The traveler hastens toward the town,  
5           And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;  
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,  
Efface<sup>2</sup> the footprints in the sands,  
10           And the tide rises, the tide falls.

15           The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls  
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler<sup>3</sup> calls;  
The day returns, but nevermore  
Returns the traveler to the shore,  
                  And the tide rises, the tide falls.

1. **curlew** (kʌrˈlɒʊ) *n.*: large, brownish shorebird with long legs.
2. **efface** (əˈfæs) *v.*: wipe out; erase.
3. **hostler** (hɒsˈlɚ) *n.*: person who takes care of horses.

## The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

**Reading Skills: Paraphrasing** Paraphrase the poem in the chart below. Remember, in a paraphrase, you must restate the poem using your own words, line by line. You must explain figures of speech to be sure you understand what is being compared with what. After you complete your paraphrase, complete the activity below the chart.

Stanzas from the Poem	Paraphrase
<p>The tide rises, the tide falls,                      The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;                      Along the sea-sands damp and brown                      The traveler hastens toward the town,                      And the tide rises, the tide falls.</p>	
<p>Darkness settles on roofs and walls,                      But the sea, the sea in the darkness                      calls;                      The little waves, with their soft, white                      hands,                      Efface the footprints in the sands,                      And the tide rises, the tide falls.</p>	
<p>The morning breaks; the steeds in                      their stalls                      Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;                      The day returns, but nevermore                      Returns the traveler to the shore,                      And the tide rises, the tide falls.</p>	

**Compare and Contrast** Read your paraphrase aloud. Then read the original poem. Compare the two versions. Your paraphrase has the same ideas, but no meter. What does the meter add to the poem?

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can simply trust ourselves—that is, trust in the power each of us has to know God directly—then we will realize that each of us is also part of the Divine Soul, the source of all good.

Emerson's sense of optimism and hope appealed to audiences who lived in a period of economic downturns, regional strife, and conflict over slavery. Your condition today, Emerson seemed to tell his readers and his listeners, may seem dull and disheartening, but it need not be. If you discover the God within you, he suggested, your lives will become a part of the grandeur of the universe.

150

**INTERPRET**  
Re-read lines 144–150. Why was Emerson's optimism appealing to the audiences of his day?  
**Audiences of his day were poor, struggling, and conflicted over slavery. They appreciated hearing optimistic sentiments.**

**FLUENCY**  
Read the boxed passage aloud twice. In your second reading, try to improve your speed as well as your comprehension.

**CLARIFY**  
Pause at line 174. Why are Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe called Dark Romantics?  
**They explored such issues as the conflict between good and evil, and the effects of sin, guilt, and madness.**

160

**The Dark Romantics**

Emerson's idealism was exciting for his audiences, but not all the writers and thinkers of the time agreed with Transcendentalist thought. "To one who has weathered Cape Horn as a common sailor," Herman Melville wrote scornfully of Emerson's ideas, "what stuff all this is!"

Some people think of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Edgar Allan Poe as anti-Transcendentalists, because their views of the world seem opposed to the optimistic views of Emerson and his followers. But these Dark Romantics, as they are known, had much in common with the Transcendentalists. Both groups valued intuition over logic and reason. Both groups, like the Puritans before them, saw signs and symbols in all events—as Anne Bradstreet found spiritual significance in the fire that destroyed her house (page 15).

170

In contrast to Emerson, however, the Dark Romantics did not believe that nature is necessarily good or harmless. Their view of existence developed from both the mystical and melancholy features of Puritan thought. In their works they explored the conflict between good and evil, the psychological effects of guilt and sin, and even madness. Behind the pastboard masks of social respectability, the Dark Romantics saw the blankness and the horror of evil. From this imaginative, unflinching vision they shaped a uniquely American literature.

72 Part 1 Collection 2: American Romanticism

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## Before You Read

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Analyzing the meter of a poem is called **scanning**. You can use special marks to scan a poem. The stress mark ( ' ) is placed over each stressed syllable. The "short" mark (  ) is placed over each unstressed syllable. Read aloud this line from "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls," emphasizing the syllables marked with a " " symbol.

Along / the sea- / sands damp / and brown

**Why Does Meter Matter?** Think of a line from a poem or song. Write it in the space below. Read the line aloud several times, marking the stressed syllables with a " " symbol and the unstressed syllables with a "  ". Then, use your symbols to read the line aloud once more, emphasizing the meter.

**Example:** Happy birthday to you.

**READING SKILLS: PARAPHRASING**

One way to better understand the meaning of a text is to **paraphrase**, or restate its ideas in your own words. Here is an example of how a line from "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls" can be paraphrased.

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**Use the Skill** As you read the poem, pause after each stanza. Paraphrase each line in the stanza, using your own words. Your paraphrase should include the important details expressed in each stanza.



**Literary Skills**  
Understand meter.  
**Reading**  
Paraphrase to clarify text.

SKILLS PRACTICE

## The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

**Reading Skills: Paraphrasing** Paraphrase the poem in the chart below. Remember, in a paraphrase, you must restate the poem using your own words, line by line. You must explain figures of speech to be sure you understand what is being compared with what. After you complete your paraphrase, complete the activity below the chart.

Stanzas from the Poem	Paraphrase
The tide rises, the tide falls, The twilight darkens, the curlew calls; Along the sea-sands damp and brown The traveler hastens toward the town, And the tide rises, the tide falls.	The tide rises and falls, night comes, a bird calls, and a traveler rushes along the damp brown beach toward town.
Darkness settles on roofs and walls, But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls; The little waves, with their soft, white hands, Efface the footprints in the sands, And the tide rises, the tide falls.	The town becomes dark, but the sound of the sea can be heard. The waves erase the traveler's footprints in the sand.
The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls; The day returns, but nevermore Returns the traveler to the shore, And the tide rises, the tide falls.	When morning comes, the horses wake up and are restless in their stalls. They stamp their hooves and neigh as the stable worker calls to them. The day comes back again, but the traveler will never come back to the beach. The tide, however, keeps rising and falling.

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**Compare and Contrast** Read your paraphrase aloud. Then read the original poem. Compare the two versions. Your paraphrase has the same ideas, but no meter. What does the meter add to the poem?

The meter of the poem helps readers feel the rhythm of the tides, rising and falling. The rhythm repeats like the waves, even when the traveler dies or moves on. The meter creates a mood of sadness.

The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls 75

# The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls

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**IDENTIFY**

Scan the meter of lines 1–5. Mark stressed syllables with ( / ) and unstressed syllables with ( ^ ).

The tide rises, the tide falls,  
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;  
Along the sea-sands damp and brown  
The traveler hastens toward the town,  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

5

**ANALYZE**

Circle the title of the poem each time it appears. In what way does its rhythm help convey meaning?

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;  
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,  
Efface<sup>2</sup> the footprints in the sands,  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

10

Its rhythm mimics its meaning. The rhythm sounds like the ebb and flow of the ocean's tide.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls  
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler<sup>3</sup> calls;  
The day returns, but nevermore  
Returns the traveler to the shore,  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

15

**FLUENCY**

Read the boxed stanza aloud. Pause only when you come to a semicolon or comma. Read once to emphasize the meter. Then read again to emphasize meaning and mood.

- curlew (kūr/lēw) n.; large, brownish shorebird with long legs.
- efface (ē-fās) v.; wipe out; erase.
- hostler (hōstlēr) n.; person who takes care of horses.

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74 Part 1

Collection 2: American Romanticism

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Selection: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sonnet

A **sonnet** is a fourteen-line poem, usually written in iambic pentameter. The **Elizabethan**, or **Shakespearean**, **sonnet** has three quatrains (four-line units) and ends with a couplet. Its rhyme scheme is typically *abab cdcd efef gg*. The **Italian**, or **Petrarchan**, **sonnet** makes a point in the first eight lines (octave) and responds to it in the last six lines (sestet). Its rhyme scheme is typically *abba abba cde cde*.

DIRECTIONS: In the chart below, identify the sonnet's rhyme scheme. Then, answer the following questions about the sonnet.

1. What is the sonnet's rhyme scheme? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the sonnet's subject? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What image, metaphor or idea does the sonnet develop? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What does the sonnet first say about its subject? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What comment or response does the sonnet then make on the subject? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What type of sonnet does this selection most closely follow? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. If the sonnet is a variation on a traditional form, how does it differ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_