Test Yourself 17a

Note: if you find a question difficult, it would be better if you skipped it and then returned to it later. To fully understand a poem like this you may have to read it through a number of times, until eventually its meaning becomes clear.

1. a Is the poem about the beauty of a well; the qualities of grass, sedge and the sea; or the mystery of nature? Write down the correct answer.

b Which pair of stanzas tell you this most clearly: stanzas 1–2; 3–4; or 5–6?

2. Does the poet see the well as mysterious because it is dangerous to the passerby; because the composition of its water is unknown; or because it is deep and its water is distant? Write down the correct answer.

3. What metaphor is used for the well in stanza 1?

4. a As you know, personification is a kind of figurative language in which human qualities are conferred upon a living thing (plant or animal) or an inanimate object (for example, a piece of furniture). How is personification used when referring to the grass and sedge in stanzas 3 and 4 of the poem?

b Which of the following human qualities are they given: timidity, fear, bravery, anxiety or courage?

5. Symmetry means order, harmony, balance or agreement.

The left-hand column in the following table shows general ways in which this can be done in poetry.

The right-hand column gives specific examples from the first four stanzas of Emily Dickinson’s poem.

Match the appropriate items. [1 mark each]