CAPITOLO

12

Nature and Imagination: Wordsworth and Coleridge

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very Heaven!" — William Wordsworth, The Prelude (1850), XI.108–109

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe rural England and the war against Napoleon (1798–1815) and place the lives and works of Wordsworth and Coleridge on a timeline.
2. I can explain the programme of *Lyrical Ballads* and its Preface, and Coleridge's ideas of imagination, fancy and the "willing suspension of disbelief".
3. I can analyse "I wandered lonely as a cloud", the Preface and the becalmed ship of the *Rime*, and compare their views of nature and memory.
4. I can use focusing and degree adverbs (*only, even, quite, rather, hardly*) with the right meaning and put adverbs in the right position.
5. I can talk for two minutes about a personal memory and write a reflective personal essay.
6. I can compare Wordsworth's nature with Leopardi's "L'infinito" and with Virgil's farmers in the *Georgics*, and connect the chapter with meteorology and glacial geography.

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On a windy April afternoon in 1802 a brother and sister walking beside Ullswater, in the north-west of England, came upon a long belt of wild daffodils on the shore. The sister, Dorothy Wordsworth, described them that evening in her journal. Her brother William turned the same scene into a poem two years later, and revised it again in 1815; today it is one of the best-known poems in the English language. In the same years his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge was writing about a sailor who shoots a sea-bird and is punished by the whole of nature. One poet found wonder in ordinary things; the other made the impossible feel true.

This chapter follows Wordsworth and Coleridge from the hopes of the French Revolution to the Lake District, through the book they wrote together, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). You read the daffodil poem, the two most famous passages of Wordsworth's Preface and the becalmed ship of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*; you learn where English puts its adverbs and how *only*, *quite* and *hardly* change a sentence; you practise talking for two minutes about a memory and write a reflective essay; and you compare Wordsworth's nature with Leopardi's hedge, Virgil's farmers, Luke Howard's clouds and the valleys carved by ice.

12.1 History and Society: Rural England and the War against Napoleon

Chapter 11 left Britain in the 1790s, at war with revolutionary France and afraid of revolution at home. This chapter covers the years from about 1798 to 1815, the years of *Lyrical Ballads* and of the long war against Napoleon, and looks beyond London to the countryside, where most people still lived. Figura 12.1 sets the lives and works of Wordsworth and Coleridge against the events of their age.

12.1.1 Fields, fences and the rural poor

In English 3 (chapter 8) you met Tudor *enclosure*: the fencing of open fields and common land. Between about 1760 and 1820 it happened again, on a much larger scale and by law. Thousands of private Acts of Parliament divided the old open fields and the commons of English villages into separate, hedged farms. Enclosure made farming more efficient and more profitable, and it helped to feed a growing population; the General Enclosure Act of 1801 made the procedure simpler and cheaper, at a time when the war had pushed the price of grain very high. But the commons had been where poor families grazed a cow or a few geese and gathered firewood. Many cottagers lost these rights and became landless labourers, dependent on wages and, in bad years, on the parish.

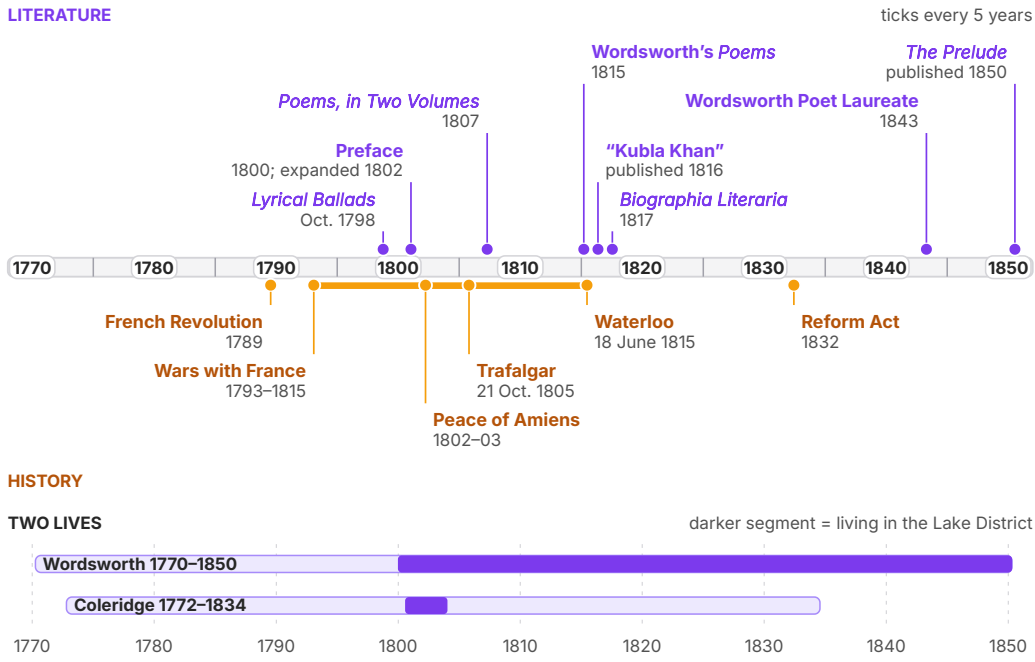


Figura 12.1 Wordsworth and Coleridge, 1770–1850, on a proportional time axis (ticks every 5 years). Above the axis, literary works (violet; dates of publication); below it, historical events (amber). At the bottom, the two lives: the darker segment marks the years each poet lived in the Lake District (Wordsworth from December 1799 until his death; Coleridge mainly at Keswick, 1800–1804). Bars show events that lasted more than a year.

Wages did not keep up with the price of bread. In 1795 the magistrates of Speenhamland, in Berkshire, decided to top up labourers' wages from the local poor rate according to the price of a loaf and the size of the family. The **Speenhamland system** (Italian *sistema di Speenhamland*) spread to many southern counties: it kept families alive, but it also allowed farmers to pay less and made the poor rates rise. On the roads of England walked beggars, pedlars, homeless women and discharged soldiers and sailors with no pension. These are exactly the people of Wordsworth's early poems: "The Female Vagrant" (1798), "The Old Cumberland Beggar" and "Michael", the story of an old shepherd who loses his son and his land (both 1800), and the old leech-gatherer of "Resolution and Independence" (1807).

12.1.2 A remote corner of England

The **Lake District**, in the old counties of Cumberland and Westmorland (today Cumbria), is a dome of mountains roughly 50 kilometres across, with England's highest peak, Scafell Pike (978 m), and long, narrow lakes in its valleys (Figura 12.2). Around 1800 it was a poor, remote region of small farms, sheep on the fells and slate quarries; many farmers still owned their own land and were proud of it. Since the 1770s, however, the taste for the picturesque (chapter 10) had

brought tourists with sketchbooks and guidebooks — Thomas West's *A Guide to the Lakes* appeared in 1778 — to admire its "views". Wordsworth, who was born at Cockermouth and went to school at Hawkshead, came back to live here in December 1799 and wrote his own *Guide to the Lakes* (first published in 1810; fifth edition, 1835). In its later editions he wrote that the lovers of the region regarded the district as "a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy" — an idea later taken up by the founders of the National Trust (1895) and of the Lake District National Park (1951).

12.1.3 The war against Napoleon

Britain was at war with France almost continuously from 1793 to 1815. In 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte seized power as First Consul, and in 1804 he crowned himself Emperor. A short peace, the Peace of Amiens (March 1802 – May 1803), allowed British travellers to visit France again — Wordsworth and Dorothy among them — and then the war began once more. In 1803–1805 a French army waited at Boulogne to invade England; hundreds of thousands of men joined volunteer units, and coastal towers and beacons were built along the south coast. In August 1805 Napoleon marched that army east against Austria, and on 21 October 1805 the British fleet under Admiral Nelson defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets at **Trafalgar**, off southwestern Spain: after that, Napoleon never again had the ships to attempt an invasion. Nelson was killed in the battle and became a national hero.

Unable to invade, Napoleon tried to strangle Britain's trade: the **Continental System** (Italian *Blocco continentale*), begun in 1806, closed the ports of his empire and its allies to British goods. Britain answered with its own blockade, and the war moved to Spain and Portugal (the Peninsular War, 1808–1814), where an army under Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, slowly pushed the French back. After Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign (1812) and his first abdication (1814), he escaped from Elba and was finally defeated at **Waterloo**, near Brussels, on 18 June 1815.

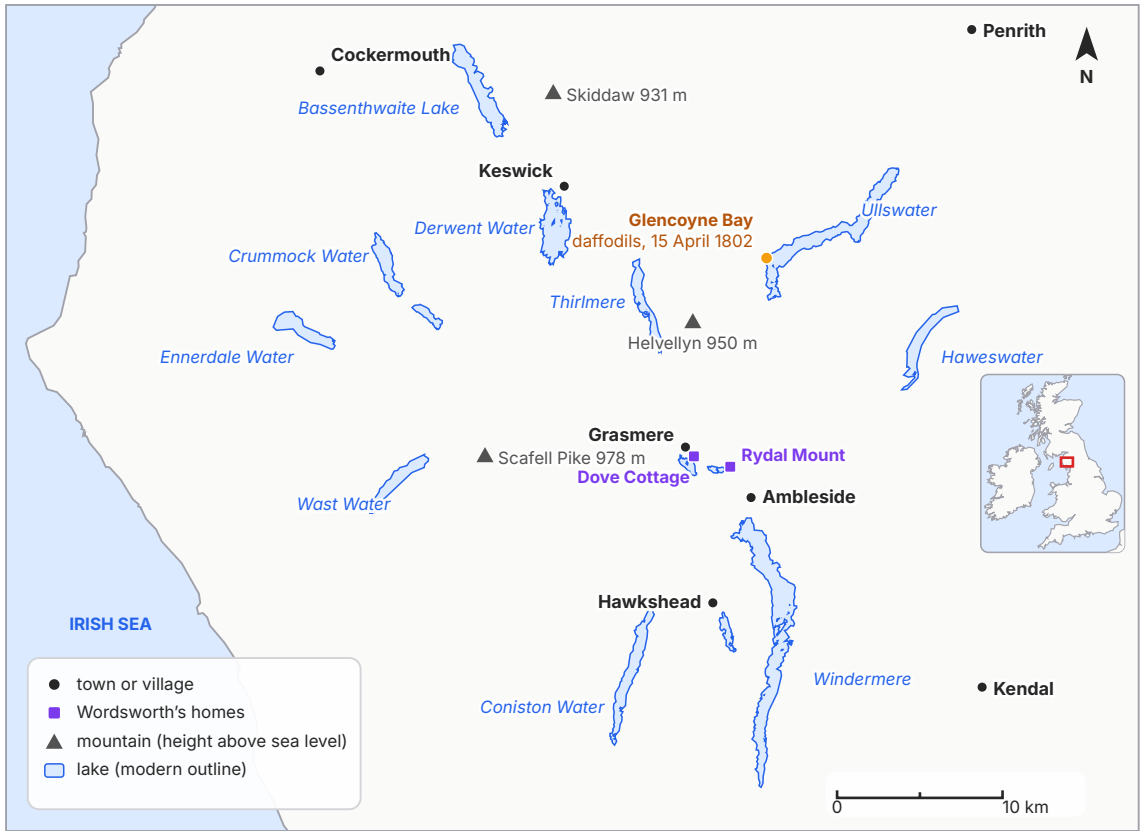


Figura 12.2 The Lake District today: the main lakes (modern outlines; Thirlmere and Haweswater were later enlarged as reservoirs), towns and mountains, Wordsworth's homes at Grasmere and Rydal, and the shore of Ullswater where he and Dorothy saw the daffodils. Inset: the position of the map in Great Britain. Lake outlines and places from OpenStreetMap.

The war was also fought at home. To pay for it, the Prime Minister William Pitt introduced Britain's first **income tax** (1799); the navy filled its ships with the help of the "press gangs", which seized seamen in the ports; bread prices caused riots in the hungry years 1795 and 1800. The government feared that the revolution might spread to Britain, and it watched anyone who seemed to sympathise with France. In the summer of 1797 the Home Office even sent an agent to Somerset to observe two young men who walked the hills at night with notebooks, had received a visit from the radical orator John Thelwall and were suspected by their neighbours of sympathising with the French: they were Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the agent found no plot.

12.1.4 "Bliss was it in that dawn"

Wordsworth was nineteen when the Bastille fell. He walked across France in the summer of 1790, at the time of the first anniversary celebrations, and in 1791–1792 he lived in Orléans and

Blois, where he became a passionate supporter of the Revolution and fell in love with a Frenchwoman, Annette Vallon; their daughter, Caroline, was born in December 1792, after he had returned to England. Years later, in *The Prelude*, he remembered that time in the lines quoted at the head of this chapter: to be alive in that "dawn" was bliss, and to be young was "very Heaven".

Then came the war between Britain and France (1793), which divided his loyalties, the Terror in Paris (1793–1794) and the French conquests in Europe. Like many of his generation — Coleridge, who in 1794 had planned with Robert Southey an ideal community, a "Pantisocracy", on the banks of the Susquehanna in America, followed the same path — Wordsworth lost his faith in revolution and looked for hope in nature, in the human heart and in the life of ordinary people. Slowly he became a conservative. In 1813 he accepted a government post, Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland; he opposed the Reform Bill of 1832; in 1843 he became Poet Laureate (chapter 4). The younger Romantics of chapter 13 never forgave him: Shelley's sonnet "To Wordsworth" (1816) mourns a poet who had once sung of "truth and liberty" and had deserted them.

DA RICORDARE

1798–1815 at a glance. Parliamentary **enclosure** c. 1760–1820 (General Enclosure Act, 1801); the **Speenhamland** system from 1795. War with France 1793–1815: Napoleon First Consul 1799, Emperor 1804; Peace of Amiens 1802–1803; **Trafalgar**, 21 October 1805; the Continental System from 1806; the Peninsular War 1808–1814; **Waterloo**, 18 June 1815. Income tax, 1799. Wordsworth in France 1790 and 1791–1792; back in the Lake District from December 1799.

12.2 Literature: *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and Coleridge

12.2.1 Two poets and one book

Wordsworth and Coleridge met in 1795, probably in Bristol, where Coleridge was lecturing against the war and the slave trade and where he married Sara Fricker, at St Mary Redcliffe, in October of that year. In 1797 they became neighbours in Somerset — Coleridge at Nether Stowey, William and Dorothy at Alfoxden, a few miles away — and for a year the three of them walked, talked and wrote almost every day. From their conversations came a plan for a joint book. Coleridge described it many years later, in chapter XIV of his *Biographia Literaria* (1817): he would write about "persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic", and make them feel real; Wordsworth would "give the charm of novelty to things of every day" and wake the mind from "the lethargy of custom".

Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems appeared anonymously in the autumn of 1798, printed in Bristol by the firm of Coleridge's friend Joseph Cottle and sold in London. It opened with Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* (spelt in a false old style) and closed with Wordsworth's "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey"; in between there were poems about a mad

mother, an idiot boy, a forsaken Indian woman, an old huntsman — people and feelings that "serious" poetry had ignored. The title itself was a provocation: a *ballad* was popular and narrative (English 3, chapter 5), a *lyric* personal and musical (chapter 11). Reviewers were puzzled; some readers loved it. A second edition, in two volumes and under Wordsworth's name only, came out in January 1801 (dated 1800) with a long **Preface**, which Wordsworth expanded in 1802. You read its two most famous passages in T2.

The Preface attacks **poetic diction** (Italian *linguaggio poetico convenzionale*): the artificial, decorative language of much eighteenth-century verse, with its personifications and periphrases — "the finny tribe" for fish, "Phoebus" for the sun. As an example of it, Wordsworth even quotes a sonnet by Thomas Gray (chapter 10). Poetry, he says, should use "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation", and the poet is simply "a man speaking to men", only more sensitive and more thoughtful than others. Later critics grouped Wordsworth, Coleridge and their friend Robert Southey, who all lived in Cumberland and Westmorland, as the **Lake Poets** (Italian *poeti dei Laghi*): a label invented by critics, often with irony, not a school the poets founded.

12.2.2 William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

Wordsworth lost his mother when he was seven and his father when he was thirteen. The orphan grew up at Hawkshead, in the Lake District, rowing, skating and climbing the fells, and he went on to St John's College, Cambridge. After France and the crisis of the 1790s he settled with his sister Dorothy, his lifelong companion and first reader, at **Dove Cottage**, Grasmere, in December 1799; he married Mary Hutchinson in 1802; the growing family left Dove Cottage for larger houses in Grasmere in 1808, and in 1813 moved to **Rydal Mount**, where he died in 1850. His great creative period lasted roughly from 1797 to 1807, the year of *Poems, in Two Volumes*; later came the long poem *The Excursion* (1814), a collected *Poems* (1815) and fame, which arrived slowly.

Three ideas run through his work. First, **nature** is a teacher and a moral guide: in "Tintern Abbey", written on a walking tour along the River Wye in July 1798, he tells how the landscape, revisited after five years, has calmed and shaped his mind, and how he now hears in nature "the still, sad music of humanity". Second, **childhood** matters: the feelings of the child are the roots of the adult's life. Third, **memory** keeps those feelings alive. In *The Prelude*, the long autobiographical poem in blank verse (English 3, chapter 10) that he began in 1798–1799 and revised all his life, he writes that "There are in our existence spots of time" (XII.208, 1850 text): **spots of time** (Italian *momenti privilegiati*, "macchie di tempo") are moments from the past, often from childhood, so vivid that remembering them has a "renovating virtue": it nourishes and repairs the mind in difficult times. *The Prelude* was published only after his death, in July 1850, with the title chosen by his widow.

Not all of Wordsworth's nature is rural. The sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (1807) describes London at dawn, seen from a coach on its way to Dover — on 31 July 1802, ac-

cording to Dorothy's journal, although the title gives a date in September — silent and "All bright and glittering in the smokeless air", as beautiful as any valley. Between 1798 and 1801 he also wrote the five short **Lucy poems**, about the death of a young girl whose identity has never been established.

12.2.3 Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

Coleridge, the youngest son of a Devon clergyman, was the most brilliant talker of his age and a man of enormous reading — in philosophy, theology, science and German literature. At Cambridge he ran into debt and, in 1793, enlisted in a cavalry regiment under a false name; his brothers bought him out. Besides his share of *Lyrical Ballads*, he invented the **conversation poem** (Italian *poesia colloquiale*): a meditative poem in blank verse, addressed to a friend or a child, which moves from a quiet scene to deep thoughts and back again, as in "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison" (1797) and "Frost at Midnight" (1798). His other famous poems of the supernatural, "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan", both written around 1797–1800, were published only in 1816. In his preface to "Kubla Khan" Coleridge claimed that he had composed the poem in a dream and that a visitor "from Porlock" interrupted him while he was writing it down: a famous story, but his own account, not a documented fact.

From 1800 Coleridge lived at Greta Hall, Keswick, near the Wordsworths. Unhappy in his marriage, ill, and addicted to **laudanum** (opium dissolved in alcohol, then a common medicine), he left for Malta in 1804, quarrelled with Wordsworth in 1810, and from 1816 lived in Highgate, near London, in the house of a doctor, James Gillman, who helped him to control his addiction. There he wrote *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a "literary life" full of criticism and philosophy, and published *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), with a new version of the *Rime*. He died in 1834.

In chapter XIII of the *Biographia* Coleridge distinguishes two powers of the mind. **Fancy** (Italian *fantasia* in the sense of "facoltà combinatoria") only combines images that memory supplies "ready made", as a child builds with bricks. The **imagination** (Italian *immaginazione*) is creative: it "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate", and "struggles to idealize and to unify" — it fuses the images into something new and living. For the Romantics, the imagination is the highest human faculty, close to the creative power of God. In chapter XIV, explaining his part in *Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge says that a poem about the supernatural must give its "shadows of imagination" enough human truth to win "that **willing suspension of disbelief** for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (Italian *sospensione volontaria dell'incredulità*): the reader knows that ghosts and curses are not real, but agrees, while reading, not to object. The phrase is still used today for novels, films and video games.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *Lyrical Ballads è una raccolta di ballate popolari antiche.* ✓ È una raccolta di poesie **nuove** di Wordsworth e Coleridge, che riprendono la forma della ballata popolare per raccontare la vita comune.

✗ *Wordsworth vide i narcisi e scrisse subito la poesia.* ✓ La passeggiata è del 15 aprile 1802; la poesia è del **1804**, uscì nel 1807 e fu ampliata nel 1815. È proprio un'emozione «ricordata in tranquillità».

✗ *Fancy* = *immaginazione.* ✓ Per Coleridge *fancy* combina immagini già pronte; l'*imagination* le fonde e crea qualcosa di nuovo. Attenzione al falso amico: *fantasy* oggi significa «fantasia, genere fantasy».

IN SINTESI

Lyrical Ballads (1798)	Wordsworth	Coleridge
Subjects	ordinary people and things of every day: shepherds, beggars, children, a landscape remembered	the supernatural or "romantic": a cursed sailor, spirits, dreams
Aim	to make the familiar new: "the charm of novelty to things of every day"	to make the impossible credible: "willing suspension of disbelief"
Language and form	"the real language of men"; ballad stanzas and blank verse	the old ballad, with archaisms; later a marginal gloss (1817)
Key texts	"Tintern Abbey", the Preface (1800, 1802), "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (1807, 1815), *The Prelude* (1850)	*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798, 1817), "Kubla Khan" (1816), *Biographia Literaria* (1817)

12.3 Texts: Daffodils, a Preface and a Painted Ship

The three texts show the two sides of *Lyrical Ballads*: Wordsworth turning an ordinary walk into a lasting memory, Wordsworth explaining what poetry is and how it is made, and Coleridge making a supernatural punishment feel physically real.

12.3.1 T1 · William Wordsworth, "I wandered lonely as a cloud"

Context. On 15 April 1802 William and Dorothy were walking home to Grasmere along the western shore of Ullswater. That evening Dorothy wrote in her journal: "I never saw daffodils so

beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and about them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake" (text of W. Knight's edition, 1897). William wrote the poem in 1804 and published it in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807) in three stanzas. For his *Poems* of 1815 he revised it and added the present second stanza; that is the text printed here. Wordsworth later said that the two best lines, 15–16 in the 1807 text and 21–22 here, were written by his wife, Mary.

Tabella 12.1 T1 — Wordsworth, "I wandered lonely as a cloud", complete. Text of *Poems by William Wordsworth* (London, 1815), vol. I, pp. 328–329, as transcribed on Wikisource; capitals and spelling as printed.

I wandered lonely as a Cloud	
That floats on high o'er Vales and Hills,	
When all at once I saw a crowd,	
A host of golden Daffodils;	
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,	5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.	
Continuous as the stars that shine	
And twinkle on the milky way,	
They stretched in never-ending line	
Along the margin of a bay:	10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,	
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.	
The waves beside them danced, but they	
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—	
A Poet could not but be gay	15
In such a jocund company:	
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought	
What wealth the shew to me had brought:	
For oft when on my couch I lie	
In vacant or in pensive mood,	20
They flash upon that inward eye	

Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

Glosses. *o'er*: over · *vales*: valleys · *host*: a great number (also an army, or the angels of heaven) · *margin*: edge, shore · *sprightly*: lively · *glee*: joy · *could not but be*: could only be · *gay*: happy, cheerful (its usual meaning until the twentieth century) · *jocund*: merry · *little thought*: did not realise at all · *shew*: show, spectacle (old spelling) · *oft*: often · *couch*: sofa · *vacant*: with an empty, idle mind · *pensive*: thoughtful · *inward eye*: the eye of the mind, memory · *bliss*: perfect happiness.

Analysis

Form. Four stanzas of six lines (sestets) in iambic tetrameter (chapter 2), rhyming *ababcc*: a quatrain in alternate rhyme closed by a couplet. The regular, light, song-like rhythm suits a poem about dancing. Two lines break it: line 6, *Fluttering and dancing in the breeze*, begins with a stressed syllable, and line 11 uses literary inversion (chapter 3), *Ten thousand saw I*, to put the number first.

Language. The poem opens with a simile (English 3, chapter 1): the speaker compares himself to a single cloud, high, alone, drifting without purpose. At once the daffodils are described with words for people — a *crowd*, a *host*, a *company* — and they are personified: they dance, toss their heads and feel *glee*. Stanza 2 widens the scene to the cosmos: the flowers are as countless as the stars of the Milky Way, and the hyperbole *Ten thousand* makes them a whole universe. Notice the vocabulary of joy (*glee*, *gay*, *jocund*, *bliss*, *pleasure*) and of money: the *golden* flowers are *wealth*, a treasure that the poet did not know he was receiving.

Time and memory. Stanzas 1–3 are in the past simple; stanza 4 moves to the present simple of habit (*For oft when on my couch I lie*). The real subject of the poem is not the walk but its memory: on the sofa, years later, the daffodils "flash" again upon the "inward eye", and the poet's heart, once *lonely*, now *dances with the Daffodils*. The last word of the poem repeats the rhyme word of line 4: the scene has come back, and the lonely cloud has become part of the crowd. Compare this with Dorothy's journal: she records the flowers; William records what they did to him.

- How does the speaker feel in line 1, and how does he feel in the last two lines? Which words show the change?
- Find three words that make the daffodils seem like people.
- Why do you think Wordsworth added stanza 2 in 1815? What does the comparison with the stars add?
- What is the "wealth" of line 18? Why did the poet "little" think about it at the time?

- Read Dorothy's journal entry again. Which of her images did William keep, and which did he change?

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Scanning a line and building a PEE paragraph. Question: *How does the rhythm of T1 support its meaning?*

- **Scan.** Line 1, with stressed syllables in capitals: *i WAN · dered LONE · ly AS · a CLOUD* — eight syllables, four iambs: iambic tetrameter. The word *as* is not stressed in speech, but the metre gives it a light beat.
- **Find the exception.** Line 6: *FLUTT'ring and DANCing IN the BREEZE*. Read with two syllables, *flutt'ring*, the line still has eight syllables, but it starts with a stress, not an unstressed syllable: the rhythm itself seems to flutter.
- **Write.** *Point:* Wordsworth uses a light, regular rhythm to make the poem dance like the flowers. *Evidence:* most lines are regular iambic tetrameter, like line 1, but line 6 opens on a stressed syllable, "Fluttering and dancing in the breeze". *Explanation:* the sudden stress imitates the movement of the flowers in the wind, and the quick tetrameter, shorter than the pentameter of serious poetry, gives the whole poem the lightness of a song.

12.3.2 T2 · William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)

Context. The Preface explains the experiment of the collection to readers who expected elegant, elevated poetry. In the first passage Wordsworth states his aims; in the second, near the end, he describes how a poem is born. Between them, in the 1802 additions, he asks "What is a Poet?" and answers that he is "a man speaking to men".

> The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to chuse incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.
>
> [...] I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.

Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, third edition (London, 1802), vol. I; text checked against the scans of the 1802 and 1805 editions (Internet Archive)

Glosses. *principal object*: main aim · *chuse*: choose (old spelling) · *throughout*: all the way through · *colouring*: colour, tone · *whereby*: so that, by which · *ostentatiously*: in a showy way · *the primary laws of our nature*: the basic laws of human psychology · *associate ideas*: connect one idea with another in the mind · *overflow*: what pours out when a container is too full · *recollected*: remembered · *tranquillity*: calm · *a species of*: a kind of · *kindred to*: similar to, related to.

Analysis

Structure and language. The first passage is a single long sentence built on four infinitives — *to chuse*, *to relate or describe*, *to throw*, *to make* — like a scientist's statement of method. Each infinitive gives one part of the programme: the **subject** (common life), the **language** (really used by men, but a *selection*), the **imagination** (a colouring that makes ordinary things look unusual) and the **purpose** (to show how the human mind works). The phrase about how we "associate ideas" comes from the psychology of the time: the philosopher David Hartley had argued (1749) that all mental life is built on associations between sensations and ideas, and Coleridge admired him so much that he named his first son Hartley.

The birth of a poem. The second passage is famous for its first sentence, but it is more subtle than it seems. Poetry is a "spontaneous overflow", an image of a liquid pouring out by itself, yet it does not come from the moment of strong feeling: it comes from "emotion recollected in tranquillity". The poet remembers in calm; while he contemplates the memory, the calm disappears and a new emotion, "kindred" to the old one, actually exists in his mind; only then does he write. The process has three stages — experience, calm recollection, renewed emotion — and T1 shows all three: the walk of 1802, the sofa, the dancing heart.

- List the four aims of the first passage in your own words.
- Why does Wordsworth write "a *selection* of language really used by men", and not simply "the language of men"?
- What is the "colouring of imagination"? Give an example from T1.
- Explain the three stages of the second passage with the help of T1.
- Is "spontaneous" the right word, if the poem is written years later? Discuss.

12.3.3 T3 · Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Part II, lines 107–126

Context. An old sailor stops one of three young men on their way to a wedding feast and, holding him with his "glittering eye", tells his story. His ship sailed south from England, crossed the Equator, and was driven by a storm into the ice near the South Pole (Figura 12.3). An albatross came out of the fog and the ice split; a good wind sprang up, and the bird followed the ship. Then, for no reason he ever explains, the Mariner shot it with his crossbow. At first his

shipmates blamed him; when the fog cleared, they approved. In Part II the wind carries the ship north into the Pacific, and then it stops.



Figura 12.3 The Mariner's voyage, schematic, as the poem and its 1817 gloss describe it: south from an English harbour to the Line, into the ice near the South Pole, then north into the Pacific, where the ship is becalmed at the Equator. The poem names no places, and its return journey (Parts V–VII) has no route; the coastlines are modern and only show where such a voyage would take a ship.

Tabella 12.2 T3 — Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 107–126, with the marginal gloss (right column). Text of *Sibylline Leaves* (London, 1817), as transcribed on Wikisource; line numbers as in modern editions.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,	*The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.*	
'Twas sad as sad could be;		
And we did speak only to break		
The silence of the sea!		110
All in a hot and copper sky,		

The bloody Sun, at noon,		
Right up above the mast did stand,		
No bigger than the Moon.		
Day after day, day after day,		115
We stuck, nor breath nor motion,		
As idle as a painted ship		
Upon a painted ocean.		
Water, water, every where,	*And the Albatross begins to be avenged.*	
And all the boards did shrink;		120
Water, water, every where,		
Nor any drop to drink.		
The very deep did rot: O Christ!		
That ever this should be!		
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs		125
Upon the slimy sea.		

Glosses. *dropt*: dropped, fell · *'twas*: it was · *did speak*, *did stand*, *did shrink*: spoke, stood, shrank (an old use of *did* without emphasis) · *copper*: the reddish metal · *stuck*: could not move · *nor breath nor motion*: neither wind nor movement · *idle*: not moving, useless · *boards*: the planks of the ship, which shrink as they dry in the heat · *the very deep*: even the sea itself · *rot*: decay · *yea*: yes, indeed · *hath*: has · *becalmed*: stopped by lack of wind · *avenged*: punished for a wrong.

Analysis

Form. Each stanza is a ballad stanza (English 3, chapter 5): a quatrain of four, three, four and three stresses, rhyming *abcb* (*be / sea*, *noon / Moon*, *motion / ocean*). Coleridge imitates the old ballads with **archaisms** (Italian *arcaismi*), words and forms that were already old in 1798 — *dropt*, *'twas*, *yea*, *did* + verb — and in 1817 he added in the margin a prose **marginal gloss** (Italian *glossa a margine*), written in the style of a learned seventeenth-century editor, which summarises and comments on the story. Elsewhere in the poem he uses **internal rhyme** (Italian *rima interna*), a rhyme inside a single line, as in "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew" (l. 103).

Language. Line 107 is built as a mirror, *dropt the breeze / the sails dropt*: this crossed structure, ABBA, is called **chiasmus** (Italian *chiasmo*), and here it makes the line itself fall and stop. Repetition stops time: *Day after day, day after day*; *Water, water, every where*. The famous simile *As idle*

as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean turns the scene into a picture in which nothing can ever move. The colours are violent — a *copper* sky, a *bloody* Sun — and the sun at noon stands "right up above the mast": a precise and correct detail, because a ship on the Equator has the sun overhead at midday around the equinoxes. Lines 119–122 contain the poem's central paradox (chapter 2): the sailors are dying of thirst in the middle of water they cannot drink, because sea water is salt.

Themes. The crime against one bird is punished by the whole of nature: the wind, the sun, the sea itself. Coleridge, who had read many travel books and sailors' narratives, makes every physical detail credible — the shrinking boards, the rotting sea, the thirst — so that the reader accepts the supernatural punishment: it is the "willing suspension of disbelief" at work. At the end of the poem the Mariner learns to love all living things, "both man and bird and beast", and is condemned to tell his story again and again.

- Find two lines that show the heat and two that show that the ship cannot move.
- Why does the Mariner say "we did speak only to break / The silence of the sea"?
- Explain the paradox of lines 119–122.
- What does the simile of the "painted ship" suggest about time?
- Compare the gloss with the verse: what does each one tell the reader, and in what tone?

APPROFONDIMENTO

An albatross around your neck. At the end of Part II the angry crew hang the dead bird round the Mariner's neck: "Instead of the cross, the Albatross / About my neck was hung" (ll. 141–142). From this image English took the idiom *an albatross around one's neck*: a burden or a guilt you cannot get rid of (*The debt became an albatross around his neck*). Line 119 also became proverbial, usually misquoted as "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink". Two centuries later, the poem still speaks through phrases whose source many speakers have forgotten.

12.4 Language: Adverbs at B2 — Focus, Degree and Position

Wordsworth did not only write about walks: he even composed his poems while walking, and said them aloud. In that sentence, *only* and *even* are small words, but they change what we understand. This section looks at three kinds of adverbs that B2 students often misuse: **focusing adverbs** (*only, even, just, also*), **degree adverbs** (*fairly, quite, rather, very, absolutely, hardly*) and the **position** of adverbs in the sentence. Adverbs of manner (*slowly, carefully*) and of frequency (*always, never*) are recalled from English 1.

12.4.1 Focusing adverbs: *only*, *even*, *just*, *also*

A **focusing adverb** (Italian *avverbio focalizzante*) points at one part of the sentence and says that it is the only one, the surprising one, or an additional one. Its meaning depends on its position,

especially in writing:

- **Only the Mariner** shot the albatross. (= nobody else shot it)
- The Mariner **only shot** the albatross. (= he shot it, but did nothing else to it: he did not eat it)
- The Mariner shot **only the albatross**. (= he shot nothing else)
- The Mariner shot the albatross **only after several days**. (= not before)

In speech, *only* usually goes in mid position (before the main verb), and stress tells the listener which word it refers to: *He only wrote it in 1804* (stress on *1804*: not earlier). In careful writing, put *only* immediately before the word or phrase it limits. At the front, *only* + a time expression causes inversion (chapter 3): *Only in 1850 was The Prelude published.*

Even marks something surprising or extreme: *Even Coleridge, his closest friend, criticised two lines of the poem* (we would expect a friend to praise it: in *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XXII, he called the "inward eye" lines "mental bombast"). *Not even* and *didn't even* add surprise to a negative: *The sailors couldn't even speak. Even if* and *even though* are conjunctions (English 3, chapter 13). **Just** can mean "only" (*just a few lines*), "exactly" (*just above the mast*) or "simply" (*I just wanted to see the lake*). **Also** goes in mid position; **too** and **as well** go at the end; *also* at the start of a sentence belongs to informal speech, while in writing *In addition* or *Moreover* is better.

Tabella 12.3 Focusing adverbs: position and meaning

Adverb	Usual position	Example
only	before the word it limits (writing); mid position + stress (speech)	*Only Dorothy kept a journal.* · *He only read it later.*
even	before the surprising element	*Even the sea seemed to rot.* · *They didn't even speak.*
just	mid position, or before a noun phrase	*I just remember the light.* · *It was just a field.*
also / *too*, *as well*	mid / end	*Coleridge also wrote prose.* · *He wrote prose too.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Avverbi focalizzanti e posizione. *Only* = «solo, soltanto», *even* = «perfino, persino» (*not even* = «neanche, nemmeno»), *just* = «solo / proprio / appena». In italiano spostiamo «solo» con una certa libertà; in inglese scritto la posizione decide il significato: *Only I saw her* (solo io l'ho vista) ≠ *I only saw her* (l'ho soltanto vista, non le ho parlato) ≠ *I saw only her* (ho visto solo lei). Gli avverbi «di metà frase» (*only, even, just, also, always, often, probably*) vanno **prima del verbo principale** ma **dopo *be* e dopo il primo ausiliare**: *She is also a writer*; *He has only seen it once*. Attenzione: in fondo alla frase si usano di solito *too* e *as well*, non *also*: ✓ *I also like Keats* / ✓ *I like Keats too*.

12.4.2 Degree adverbs and gradable adjectives

A **degree adverb** (Italian *avverbio di grado*) tells us "how much". In English 2 (Unit 10) you learnt intensifiers as words; here is the rule behind them. Most adjectives are **gradable adjectives** (Italian *aggettivi graduabili*): something can be more or less *cold, steep, tired*. Others are **ungradable adjectives** (Italian *aggettivi non graduabili*): **extreme** adjectives, which already contain "very" (*freezing, exhausted, wonderful*), and **absolute** adjectives, which describe a yes-or-no quality (*perfect, impossible, unique, dead*). Gradable adjectives take *a bit, fairly, quite, rather, very, extremely*; ungradable ones take *absolutely, completely, totally, utterly*. *Really* goes with both. Figura 12.4 places them on a scale.



Figura 12.4 Adverbs at B2. A: degree adverbs on an approximate scale of strength with gradable adjectives (British English), and the adverbs that go with ungradable adjectives. B: the three positions of adverbs in a sentence (front, mid, end), with the kinds of adverb that usually go in each.

- **Fairly** is the weakest: *The path was fairly steep* (steep, but not very).
- **Quite** in British English means "moderately" with a gradable adjective — *The walk was quite long* (abbastanza lunga) — but "completely" with an ungradable one — *You're quite right; that's quite impossible*. In American English *quite* usually means "very". In speech, intonation matters: *It was QUITE good*, with a falling tone, sounds a little disappointed.
- **Rather** is stronger than *quite*, and often suggests surprise or criticism: *The poem is rather short for such a famous text.* It also goes with comparatives and with *too*: *rather better than I expected*, *rather too cold*.

- **Very** and **extremely** go only with gradable adjectives: ✓ *very cold*, ✓ *absolutely freezing*, ✗ *very freezing*, ✗ *absolutely cold*.
- Word order with a singular noun: *a fairly long walk, a very long walk*, but *quite a long walk*, and *rather a long walk* or *a rather long walk*.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Grado e posizione. *Very / extremely* + aggettivo graduabile (*very tired* = molto stanco); *absolutely / completely / totally* + aggettivo estremo o assoluto (*absolutely exhausted* = stanco morto; *completely impossible*). *Quite* in inglese britannico è una parola «doppia»: con un aggettivo graduabile vuol dire «abbastanza» (*quite good* = discreto, non ottimo), con uno non graduabile «del tutto» (*quite right* = giustissimo). *Hardly / barely / scarcely* = «a malapena, quasi non»: hanno già valore negativo, quindi niente doppia negazione (*I could hardly hear* = non sentivo quasi niente). Ricorda infine che l'avverbio non separa mai il verbo dal complemento oggetto, al contrario dell'italiano: «Parla bene l'inglese» = *She speaks English well*.

Hardly, barely, scarcely

These three degree adverbs have a negative meaning: "almost not". *The sailors could hardly speak; there was barely a breath of wind; he scarcely noticed the time.* Because they are already negative, they never take another negative (✗ *couldn't hardly*), and they are followed by *any* and *ever*: *hardly any water, hardly anyone, hardly ever* (= almost never). Do not confuse *hardly* with *hard*: *He worked hard* (molto, con impegno) ≠ *He hardly worked* (quasi per niente). The adverb *little* works in a similar way in literary English: Wordsworth "little thought" (T1, line 17) = he hardly thought at all. At the front of a sentence, *Hardly… when* and *Scarcely… when* take inversion, as you saw in chapter 3.

12.4.3 Where adverbs go: front, mid and end

Adverbs have three main positions (Figura 12.4, B). **Front position**, before the subject, is for linking adverbs (*However, Then*), comment adverbs (*Luckily, Surprisingly*) and time expressions we want to emphasise (*In 1799 they moved to Grasmere*). **Mid position** is between the subject and the main verb, after *be* and after the first auxiliary: frequency (*always, often, never*), focus (*only, even, also, just*), certainty (*probably, certainly*) and some degree adverbs (*almost, hardly, really*). **End position** is for manner, place and time, usually in that order: *Dorothy wrote carefully in her journal every evening*.

The golden rule: an adverb never goes between a verb and its direct object. Italian allows *Mi piace molto la poesia*; English does not: ✗ *I like very much poetry* → ✓ *I like poetry very much* or ✓ *I really like poetry*. Long adverbial phrases also go at the end: ✗ *He read with great attention the Preface* → ✓ *He read the Preface with great attention.*

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I like very much the poems of Wordsworth.* ✓ *I like Wordsworth's poems very much.* / ✓ *I really like Wordsworth's poems.*

✗ *The view from Helvellyn was very amazing.* ✓ *...was absolutely amazing.* / ✓ *...was very beautiful.*

✗ *We couldn't hardly see the path.* ✓ *We could hardly see the path.*

✗ *He worked hardly on the poem for two years.* ✓ *He worked hard on the poem...* (*hardly* = quasi per niente).

✗ *She always is late.* ✓ *She is always late.* (dopo *be*) · ✗ *He also has read it.* ✓ *He has also read it.* (dopo il primo ausiliare)

✗ *The test was quite easy* per dire «facilissimo». ✓ *The test was very easy.* In inglese britannico *quite easy* = «abbastanza facile».

12.5 Skills: the Long Turn and the Reflective Essay

12.5.1 Vocabulary: landscape, nature and memory

Wordsworth's poetry, Callum's field trip and your own memories need the same words: the shapes of the land and the ways we remember.

Tabella 12.4 Landscape, nature and memory

Word	Meaning	Example
valley (n.)	low land between hills or mountains	*Great Langdale is a wide, flat-floored valley.*
stream (n.)	a small, narrow river	*A stream ran down from the tarn to the village.*
meadow (n.)	a field of grass and wild flowers, often cut for hay	*Sheep were grazing in the meadows by the lake.*
fell (n.)	a mountain or high, open hill in northern England (from Old Norse)	*We climbed the fells above Grasmere.*
lake (n.)	a large area of water surrounded by land; a small mountain lake is a *tarn*	*Windermere is the largest natural lake in England.*
cliff (n.)	a high, steep face of rock	*Ravens nest on the cliffs above the valley.*
recollect (v.)	to remember, often with an effort; *recollection* (n.)	*I can still recollect the smell of the rain.*

tranquil (adj.)	calm and peaceful; *tranquillity* (n.)	*The lake was tranquil in the evening light.*
vivid (adj.)	very clear and bright, especially of colours and memories	*I have a vivid memory of that day.*
glimpse (n., v.)	a quick, incomplete view; to see for a moment	*We caught a glimpse of the summit between the clouds.*

Sound words: onomatopoeia and sound verbs

Onomatopoeia (Italian *onomatopea*) is the use of words whose sound imitates what they mean: *splash, buzz, hiss, crash*. English has a large family of **sound verbs**, each tied to typical subjects. Leaves and paper **rustle** (*frusciare*); a stream, the wind or quiet voices **murmur** (*mormorare*); the sea, a waterfall, a storm or a lion **roar** (*ruggire, rombare*); water **splashes** when something falls into it (*schizzare, sciabordare*); old doors, floorboards and the timbers of a ship **creak** (*cigolare, scricchiolare*). Most are also nouns: *the rustle of leaves, the roar of the falls*. Poets use them to make a scene audible. Coleridge's ice "cracked and growled, and roared and howled" (*Rime*, l. 61): four sound verbs in one line, three of them borrowed from animals.

12.5.2 Reading: a field-trip journal

Before you read. Callum Reid is studying A-level geography at Hillside Academy in Bristol. In the autumn his class spent three days in the Lake District; he kept a journal and posted it on the Link Reading Club blog. Have you ever visited the house of a writer? What did you expect to find there?

Reading Callum Reid, "Three days in the fells" (Link Reading Club blog)

Monday — Grasmere. The coach from Bristol took most of the day, and it rained for the last hundred miles. I had only read "I wandered lonely as a cloud" the night before, in a copy Mrs Hill lent me, which is full of her pencil notes. At Dove Cottage the guide asked who knew the poem, and I put my hand up rather too fast. Then she told us it was written in 1804, two years after the walk by Ullswater, so I hadn't even got that right. The cottage is tiny: low ceilings, dark wooden panels, a stone floor that is freezing even in socks. It had been an inn before William and Dorothy rented it, and after them the writer Thomas De Quincey lived there. The guide showed us the garden behind the house, which climbs up the hill. Wordsworth used to walk up and down a path there, reciting his lines aloud. I can recollect most of my own poems because I haven't written any.

Tuesday — Great Langdale. This was the real reason for the trip: fieldwork. In groups of four we measured the cross-profile of the valley with clinometers and a long tape, from one side across the floor to the other. The floor is almost completely flat, and then the sides go up steeply: a textbook U, carved by a glacier during the last ice age. Later we saw a stream falling in a series of waterfalls from a small side valley high above us — a hanging valley, our teacher said, left high when the main glacier cut the big valley deeper. By three o'clock I could hardly feel my fingers and my notebook was a sort of soup, but our profile was quite good, and our teacher actually said so.

Wednesday — Easedale Tarn. On the last morning the clouds lifted at last. We walked from Grasmere up beside Sourmilk Gill, a stream that roars down over the rocks, foaming as white as milk (hence the name), to Easedale Tarn, a small, dark lake in a hollow among the fells. Everyone went quiet. You could hear only the wind rustling the dead bracken and the water murmuring at the edge. For a moment I caught a glimpse of what Wordsworth meant by tranquillity: it isn't silence, it's noise that doesn't ask you for anything. On the way back we stopped at St Oswald's Church, where the Wordsworths are buried, and I read the poem again by the graves. It is October, so there wasn't a single daffodil. Next time: April.

What I take home. Before this trip I thought geography and poetry had nothing to say to each other. Now I think they are both about the same slow work: ice that needs thousands of years to make a valley, and a memory that needs two years to become a poem. I also think I owe Mrs Hill a new copy.

After reading. a What mistake did Callum make at Dove Cottage? b Find two facts about the history of the cottage. c What did the class measure in Great Langdale, and what did the measurements show? d What is a hanging valley, according to the journal? e What does Callum mean by "noise that doesn't ask you for anything"? f Find in the text three degree adverbs and two focusing adverbs, and say what each one modifies.

12.5.3 Speaking: the individual long turn

In many oral exams and in real life you have to speak alone, without interruption, for a set time: a **long turn** (Italian *monologo*, *turno lungo*). The task here is to talk for **two minutes** about a personal memory. Good long turns have a simple shape: **set the scene** (when, where, who), **tell what happened** (two or three moments, in the right tenses), and **reflect** (why you still remember it, what it means to you now). Wordsworth's three stages — experience, recollection, renewed feeling — are a good model. Do not learn a text by heart: prepare four or five key words, keep an eye on the time, and if you lose a word, describe it (*the thing you use to…*) and go on.

Tabella 12.5 Useful language — talking about a memory

Function	Useful language
Introducing the memory	*I'd like to talk about… · One memory that has stayed with me is… · It happened when I was about…*
Setting the scene	*It was a… day in… · I was with… · We had just…*
Telling what happened	*At first… · Then, all of a sudden… · While we were…, … · By the time…, we had…*
Describing sensations	*I can still hear / see / smell… · What I remember most vividly is… · Everything went quiet.*
Reflecting	*Looking back, I realise that… · It taught me that… · I didn't know it then, but… · Whenever I…, I think of…*
Gaining time, correcting yourself	*Let me think… · What I mean is… · Or rather…*

Finishing	*So that's why... · That's probably the reason I still...*

- **Task 1.** Talk for two minutes about a place that you remember from your childhood. Your partner times you and notes the linking expressions you use; then swap.
- **Task 2.** Choose one of these prompts and talk for two minutes: *a moment when nature surprised you*; *a day when everything went wrong*; *an object that brings back a memory*. After your turn, your partner asks you one follow-up question.

12.5.4 Writing: a reflective personal essay

A **reflective essay** (Italian *saggio riflessivo*, *testo di riflessione personale*) starts from a personal experience — a place, a moment, a person — and moves from **description** to **reflection**: what the experience meant then, what it means now, and what it says about the writer or about life. It is personal but not a diary: it is shaped for a reader, it has a clear point, and it is written in a neutral to semi-formal register. Its typical tense pattern is the one of T1: past tenses for the memory, present tenses for the reflection. The model below was written by Aoife Byrne, who is in her last year of school in Galway and plans to study marine science.

Tabella 12.6 Model text — a reflective personal essay (Aoife Byrne, "The rock pool"; 241 words)

When I was eight, my grandfather took me to the shore below Salthill on a grey Sunday in March. The tide was out, the wind was cold, and I wanted to go home. Then he knelt beside a rock pool and told me to wait. "Don't look for anything," he said. "Just look."
For a long time nothing happened. Then the surface of the water seemed to open. A red anemone slowly unfolded its arms; a tiny crab ran sideways under a stone; something green and almost invisible moved among the weed. The pool, which I had hardly noticed, was crowded with life. I remember the smell of salt and the cold in my knees, but most vividly I remember the feeling that a whole world had been there all the time, waiting for me to be quiet.
I did not understand then why that afternoon mattered so much. Looking back, I think it taught me the most important thing I know: that attention is a kind of respect. Today, when I study biology, I still find that the best discoveries come not from rushing but from waiting, exactly as my grandfather said.
He died two years ago, and I have only been back to that shore once. The pool was still there, of course. Rock pools are emptied and filled again twice a day by the tide, and somehow they remain the same. Perhaps memories work in a similar way.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

How the model works.

- **Opening (paragraph 1):** a precise scene — age, place, weather, a person — and a hook: the grandfather's words, in direct speech, which the essay will return to.
- **Description (paragraph 2):** past tenses, the senses (sight, smell, touch) and vivid verbs (*unfolded, ran sideways*); one sentence moves from the senses to the feeling (*most vividly I remember the feeling that…*).
- **Reflection (paragraph 3):** the turn from then to now is signalled by *Looking back*; the writer states her point in one clear sentence (*attention is a kind of respect*) and links it to her present life.
- **Ending (paragraph 4):** a return to the place, a fact of nature (the tides) used as an image for memory, and a quiet final sentence that opens a thought instead of closing it.
- **Language:** degree and focusing adverbs used precisely (*hardly noticed, only been back once, most vividly*); no clichés such as "an unforgettable experience".

Checklist. ✓ a specific moment or place, not a whole holiday · ✓ details of the senses · ✓ past tenses for the memory, present for the reflection · ✓ a clear sentence that says what the experience means · ✓ a link between then and now · ✓ an ending that echoes the opening · ✓ 220–260 words, paragraphs, neutral register.

Task. Write a reflective personal essay (220–260 words) about a place you knew as a child and that you have seen again, or would like to see again. Before writing, list: three details of the senses; one sentence somebody said; what the place means to you now. **Research (TIC):** find one fact about the history or geography of your place on a reliable website (a museum, a national park, a city archive) and use it in your essay; note where you found it and check it on a second source.

LEARNING TO LEARN

From one text to the whole programme: a concept map for the *colloquio*. In the oral exam you may start from a short text or an image and have to connect it to a period, a theme and other subjects. Practise with T1. Write "I wandered lonely as a cloud" in the centre of a page. Draw four branches: **period** (Romanticism, *Lyrical Ballads*, the Napoleonic years), **theme** (nature and memory, "emotion recollected in tranquillity"), **other literatures** (Leopardi's "L'infinito"; Virgil's *Georgics*) and **other subjects** (Howard's clouds in earth science; glacial valleys in geography; the history of tourism). On each branch write two facts and one quotation of a few words. Then talk through the map in three minutes, moving from branch to branch with linking phrases (*This connects with… · A similar idea appears in…*). The same map works in Italian, Latin and Greek: try it with a lyric by Leopardi, an ode by Horace or a fragment of Sappho.

12.6 Connections: Nature, the Infinite and the Truth

12.6.1 Leopardi's hedge

In 1819, in Recanati, the twenty-year-old Giacomo Leopardi wrote a short poem in blank verse — *endecasillabi sciolti* — that is to Italian readers what the daffodils are to English ones. It begins with a hill and a hedge:

> Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle,
> e questa siepe, che da tanta parte
> dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.
>
> Giacomo Leopardi, "L'infinito", ll. 1–3 (written 1819). Text of *Canti*, ed. F. Donati (1917), Wikisource

Always dear to me was this lonely hill, / and this hedge, which shuts out the gaze / from so great a part of the farthest horizon. (Translation by the editors.)

Both poets start from a real place and a moment of solitude, and both end in joy: Wordsworth's heart "dances with the Daffodils", and Leopardi's thought drowns in immensity, "e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare" (l. 15). But the roads are opposite. Wordsworth looks *at* nature, and nature gives him something — wealth, company, a lesson that memory keeps. Leopardi is stopped by nature: the hedge **hides** the horizon, and precisely because he cannot see, his imagination builds "interminati spazi" and "sovrumani silenzi". For Wordsworth nature is a teacher and a friend; for Leopardi it is the starting point of an experience of the infinite that happens inside the mind, where the eternal and "le morte stagioni" meet the present. The comparison does not suggest an influence: it shows two Romantic answers, born in different countries, to the same question about nature and the imagination.

12.6.2 Virgil's farmers

Wordsworth's countryside has an ancestor you read in Latin this year. Virgil's *Georgics* (c. 37–29 BC), a didactic poem in four books on fields, trees and vines, animals and bees, was written as Italy came out of twenty years of civil war. Book II ends with a famous praise of country life:

> *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,*
> *agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis*
> *fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.*
>
> Virgil, *Georgics* II.458–460 (text of thelatinlibrary.com, with *v* for consonantal *u*; checked against la.wikisource)

O farmers, happy beyond measure, if only they knew their blessings! For them, far from the clash of arms, the most just earth herself pours from the soil an easy living. (Translation by the editors.)

Both poets wrote in wartime, and both looked to the land for what war had destroyed. Like Virgil, Wordsworth believed that country people live closer to what lasts: in the Preface of 1800 he explains that "Low and rustic life was generally chosen" because there the passions of men are joined to "the beautiful and permanent forms of nature". The differences matter as much. Virgil speaks *about* his farmers, from outside — the very lines that praise them say that they do not know their luck — and his earth gives an "easy" living only in this ideal picture: elsewhere in the poem the farmer's life is *labor … improbus*, relentless toil (I.145–146). Wordsworth gives his country people a voice: the old shepherd of "Michael. A Pastoral Poem" (1800), the leech-gatherer, the female vagrant. And they speak of loss — a debt, a son gone to the city, a field sold to strangers. Virgil's farmers would be happy if they knew it; Wordsworth's shepherd knows exactly what he has lost.

12.6.3 Manzoni and "il vero"

Wordsworth's Preface asked poetry to choose "incidents and situations from common life". In Italy a similar demand came from Alessandro Manzoni: in a letter on Romanticism to Cesare d'Azeglio (September 1823) he asked for a literature with the useful as its aim, the interesting as its means and **"il vero per soggetto"** — truth as its subject. Unlike Wordsworth, he looked for that truth mainly in history, as you will see in chapter 14.

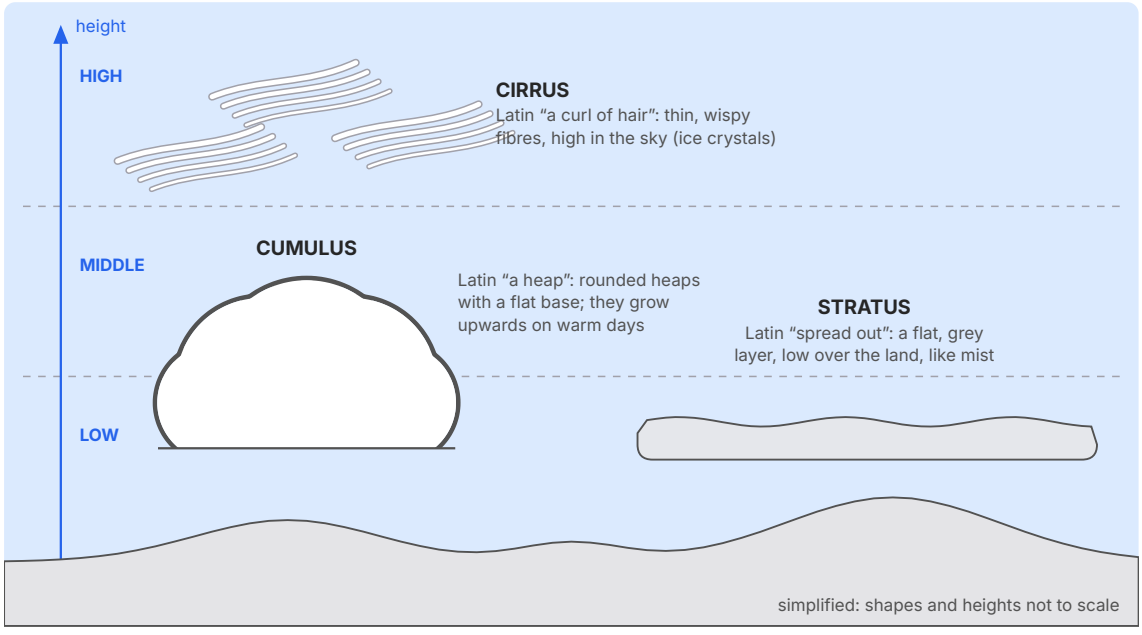


Figura 12.5 Luke Howard's three basic cloud forms (1803): cirrus (high, fibrous), cumulus (heaped, with a flat base, growing upwards) and stratus (a low, flat layer). Simplified: heights are shown only as high, middle and low, and shapes are not to scale.

COLLEGAMENTI

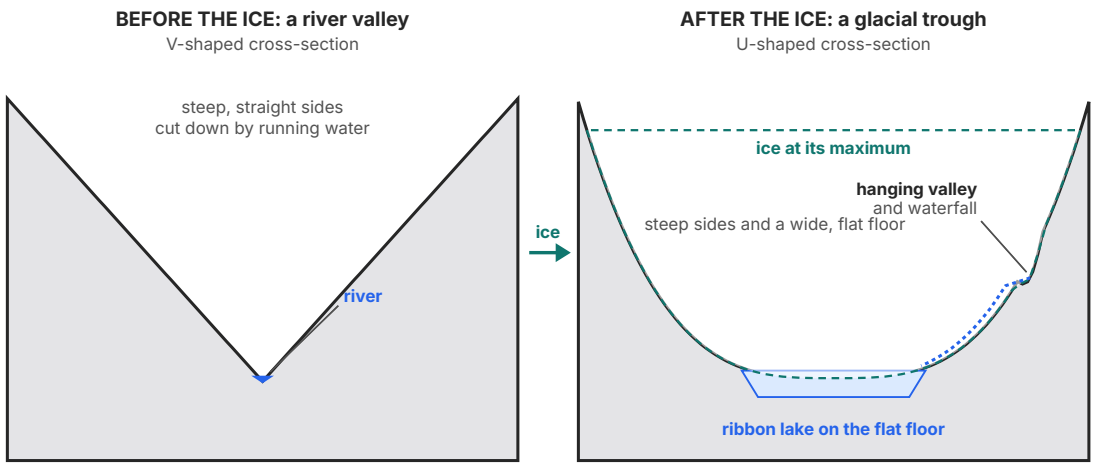
Meteorology: Luke Howard names the clouds. In December 1802 Luke Howard (1772–1864), a London pharmacist and amateur scientist, read a paper "On the Modifications of Clouds" to a small scientific society; it was printed in 1803. Before him, clouds had no agreed names. Howard used Latin, as Linnaeus had done for plants, and described three basic forms (Figura 12.5): **cirrus** ("a curl of hair"), thin fibres high in the sky; **cumulus** ("a heap"), rounded masses with a flat base that grow upwards; **stratus** ("spread out"), a flat layer low over the land. He also named **nimbus**, the rain cloud, and combinations such as *cirrocumulus* and *cirrostratus*. His system was a success across Europe — Goethe wrote poems in his honour — and the international classification used by meteorologists today still builds its ten main cloud types on his Latin names.

Wordsworth, too, looked at clouds as an observer. In his *Guide to the Lakes* he asks the reader to imagine that "our station" is "a cloud hanging midway" between Great Gable and Scafell, in order to see the shape of the whole district from above. Which of Howard's types do you think is the "lonely" cloud of T1, floating "on high o'er Vales and Hills"?

COLLEGAMENTI

Geography: valleys made by ice. The Lake District owes its shape to water and ice. During the ice ages, glaciers flowed out from the high central fells and turned narrow, V-shaped river valleys into wide **U-shaped valleys**, or **glacial troughs** (Italian *valli glaciali*, "a U"), with steep sides and flat floors (Figura 12.6). Where the ice dug deeper hollows, long **ribbon lakes** such as Windermere and Wast Water now lie in the valley floors. Smaller side valleys, which their own small glaciers deepened less, were left "hanging" high above the main valley: a **hanging valley**, whose stream now falls into the main valley as a waterfall. High on the mountains, ice carved armchair-shaped hollows called **corries**, often filled by a small round lake, a **tarn** (Italian *laghetto glaciale*, from Old Norse), such as Red Tarn below Helvellyn. The ice finally disappeared from the district at the end of the last cold period, about 11,700 years ago.

Because the Lake District is a dome, its valleys spread outwards from the centre, a pattern geographers call *radial drainage*. Wordsworth noticed it long before the theory of ice ages existed (it was proposed only in the 1830s and 1840s): in his *Guide* he compares the valleys to "spokes from the nave of a wheel".



Simplified cross-sections; vertical scale exaggerated. Great Langdale, Wasdale and the valley of Windermere have this U shape; Red Tarn, below Helvellyn, lies in a corrie, a hollow carved by ice.

Figura 12.6 From river valley to glacial trough, in simplified cross-section (vertical scale exaggerated). Left: a V-shaped valley cut by a river. Right: the same valley after glaciation, U-shaped, with a ribbon lake on its flat floor and a hanging valley with a waterfall on its side; the dashed line shows the ice at its maximum.

SINTESI

- Parliamentary **enclosure** (c. 1760–1820) and high bread prices made many cottagers landless; the **Speenhamland** system (1795) topped up wages. Beggars and vagrants fill Wordsworth's early poems.
- War with France, 1793–1815: **Trafalgar** (21 October 1805), the **Continental System** (1806), **Waterloo** (18 June 1815); at home, income tax (1799), press gangs and fear of radicals.
- Wordsworth welcomed the French Revolution ("Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive"), then turned to nature and, later, to conservatism (Poet Laureate 1843). From 1799 he lived in the **Lake District**.
- ***Lyrical Ballads*** (1798): Coleridge the supernatural made credible, Wordsworth the "charm of novelty" in everyday things. The **Preface** (1800, 1802) rejects **poetic diction**: poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" from "emotion recollected in tranquillity".
- **Wordsworth** (1770–1850): nature as teacher, childhood, memory, **spots of time**; "Tintern Abbey" (1798), *The Prelude* (1850).
- **Coleridge** (1772–1834): conversation poems, the *Rime* (1798; gloss 1817), "Kubla Khan" (1816); *Biographia Literaria* (1817): **fancy** vs **imagination**, the "**willing suspension of disbelief**".
- T1 (1815 text): sestets in iambic tetrameter, *ababcc*; from loneliness to company through memory. T2: the aims of the book and the three stages of a poem. T3: ballad stanzas, archaisms, chiasmus, the paradox of "Water, water, every where".
- Adverbs: *only, even, just, also* change meaning with their position; *fairly* < *quite* < *rather* < *very* with gradable adjectives, *absolutely* with ungradable ones; *hardly, barely, scarcely* are negative; never put an adverb between verb and object.
- Skills: landscape and sound words; a two-minute long turn about a memory; the reflective essay, from description to reflection.
- Connections: Leopardi's "L'infinito" (1819), Virgil's farmers (*Georgics* II.458–460), Manzoni's "il vero per soggetto" (1823), Luke Howard's clouds (1803), glacial valleys and tarns.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [WU] D. Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology*: the selections from Wordsworth (with the Preface and *The Prelude*), Coleridge (*The Rime* in the 1798 and 1817 texts) and Dorothy Wordsworth's journals.
- [BUT] M. Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*: the chapters on *Lyrical Ballads* and on the politics of the 1790s.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. D: the introduction to the Romantic period and the selections from Wordsworth and Coleridge.
- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the chapter on the first Romantic generation.
- [MOR] K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*: the chapters on the age of revolution, enclosure and the French wars.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries "Romanticism", "poetic diction", "fancy and imagination" and "willing suspension of disbelief".
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on *only*, *quite*, *rather*, *hardly* and on the position of adverbs.
- [HEW] M. Hewings, *Advanced Grammar in Use*: the units on gradable and ungradable adjectives and on adverb position.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● When and how was *Lyrical Ballads* first published?
   - **A.** in 1798, anonymously
   - **B.** in 1798, under the names of both poets
   - **C.** in 1802, under Coleridge's name alone
   - **D.** in 1815, with the Preface

2. ● According to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, what was Wordsworth's task in *Lyrical Ballads*?
   - **A.** to make supernatural characters credible
   - **B.** to write poems in Scots dialect
   - **C.** to give the charm of novelty to things of every day
   - **D.** to translate old popular ballads

3. ● For Coleridge, the *fancy*...
   - **A.** is the same as the imagination
   - **B.** is the highest power of the human mind
   - **C.** dissolves images in order to recreate them
   - **D.** combines images that memory supplies ready made

4. ● True or false? Correct the false statements. a Parliamentary enclosure stopped during the wars with France. b The Speenhamland system topped up wages according to the price of bread. c After Trafalgar, a French invasion of Britain was no longer a real danger. d Wordsworth never visited France. e Coleridge published "Kubla Khan" as soon as he had written it. f *The Prelude* was published after Wordsworth's death.

5. ● Match each work with its author and its date. Works: *Lyrical Ballads* · "Tintern Abbey" · *Biographia Literaria* · *The Prelude* · "Kubla Khan" · *Guide to the Lakes* (first edition). Authors: Wordsworth · Coleridge · both. Dates: 1798 (twice) · 1810 · 1816 · 1817 · 1850.

6. ●● Complete the timeline with the right years. a Napoleon crowns himself Emperor. b William and Dorothy move into Dove Cottage. c The Battle of Trafalgar. d The Continental System begins. e The Battle of Waterloo. f Wordsworth becomes Poet Laureate.

7. ●●● In 50–70 words, explain how and why Wordsworth's attitude to the French Revolution changed between 1790 and the 1810s.

8. ●● Explain each term in one or two sentences and give an example: a poetic diction b spots of time c willing suspension of disbelief d conversation poem.

Text Analysis

9. ● In T1, the "inward eye" (l. 21) is…

   A. the poet's sight on a sunny day

   B. the eye of the mind: memory and imagination

   C. Dorothy's journal

   D. the yellow centre of a daffodil

10. ● T1. Answer briefly. a Where exactly are the daffodils? b What are they compared to in stanza 2? c Who or what are "they" in line 13? d Where is the poet in stanza 4, and what happens to him there?

11. ●● T1. These are lines 4–6 of the 1807 text: "A host of dancing Daffodils; / Along the Lake, beneath the trees, / Ten thousand dancing in the breeze." Compare them with lines 4–6 of the 1815 text. What did Wordsworth change, and where did he move the number "Ten thousand"? Which version do you prefer, and why?

12. ●● T1. Mark the stressed syllables of lines 3 and 17 in CAPITALS and count the syllables. Then write out the rhyme scheme of stanza 3 and find the pair of words that rhyme least perfectly.

13. ●● T2. Paraphrase in modern, simple English: a "to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way" b "emotion recollected in tranquillity" c "an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced".

14. ●● T3. Find: a two archaisms b a chiasmus c a simile d a repetition e a paradox f the rhyme scheme of lines 115–118.

15. ●●● T1 and T3. Write a PEE paragraph (100–130 words) on this question: *How differently do Wordsworth and Coleridge present nature in these two texts?*

16. ●● Connections. Read Virgil's lines (*Georgics* II.458–460) and the translation again. a Whom does Virgil call "fortunate", and on what condition? b What does the earth give them, and what are they far from? c Give one similarity and one difference between Virgil's farmers and Wordsworth's country people.

Language

17. ● In British English, with normal intonation, "The test was quite easy" means that the test was…

    A. extremely easy
    B. not easy at all
    C. reasonably easy, but not very
    D. completely easy

18. ● Which sentence is correct?

    A. I like this poem very much.
    B. I like very much this poem.
    C. I very much this poem like.
    D. I like this very much poem.

19. ● The view from Helvellyn was ___ breathtaking.

    A. very
    B. fairly
    C. a bit
    D. absolutely

20. ● Complete with *absolutely · fairly · quite · hardly · rather · very* (use each once). a The water in the tarn was ___ freezing, so nobody swam. b The path to Easedale Tarn is ___ steep, but not very: even young children can walk it. c You're ___ right: the poem was written in 1804. d After days without wind, the sailors could ___ move. e The guide's talk was ___ too long: some of us almost fell asleep. f Dove Cottage is ___ small: in some rooms tall visitors have to bend their heads.

21. ●● Add *only* to this sentence, *Dorothy wrote about the daffodils on 15 April 1802*, so that it has the meaning in brackets. a (Nobody else wrote about them.) b (She wrote about nothing else.) c (She did not write about them on any other day.) d (She wrote about them, but she did not draw or pick them.)

22. ●● Correct the mistakes (✗). a ✗ *We visited yesterday Dove Cottage.* b ✗ *The lake was very enormous.* c ✗ *I couldn't hardly believe it.* d ✗ *She speaks very well English.* e ✗ *He has written also a guidebook.* f ✗ *It was a quite cold morning.*

23. ●● Put the adverbs in brackets in the correct position. a Wordsworth composed his poems aloud. (often) b Coleridge was ill. (often) c They walked to Grasmere. (in the evening, slowly) d The guide didn't know the answer. (even) e Wordsworth's poems have been translated into Italian. (also)

24. ●● Rewrite each sentence with the word in brackets and *any*, *anyone* or *ever*. a There was almost no wind. (hardly) b Dorothy almost never missed a day in her journal. (hardly) c Almost nobody spoke on the walk to the tarn. (hardly) d The sailors had almost no water left. (barely)

25. ●●● Translate into English. a Solo nel 1850 il pubblico poté leggere *The Prelude*. b La passeggiata era piuttosto lunga, ma il panorama era assolutamente splendido. c Non riuscivo quasi a vedere il sentiero, e non c'era neanche un rifugio.

Vocabulary

26. ● Complete with *fell · vivid · meadow · glimpse · recollect · tranquil*. a From the top of the ___ we could see three lakes. b I have a ___ memory of my first day at school. c The cows were lying in the ___ beside the river. d We only caught a ___ of the deer before it ran into the wood. e I can't ___ the name of the hotel. f The evening was ___: no wind, no voices, only birds.

27. ● Complete with the past simple of *rustle · creak · roar · splash · murmur*. Use one verb twice. a The dry leaves ___ in the wind. b The old stairs ___ under our feet. c After the rain the waterfall ___ like a train. d A child ___ through the puddles. e The stream ___ quietly over the stones. f The timbers of the ship ___ as the waves hit them.

28. ●● Match the words to make collocations from the chapter: 1 vivid 2 tranquil 3 steep 4 catch 5 powerful 6 spontaneous — a a glimpse b feelings c overflow d memory e slope f evening. Then use three of them in sentences of your own.

Writing and Speaking

29. ●●● Writing. Write a reflective personal essay (220–260 words) with the title *A place I have never forgotten*. Describe the place as you knew it, then reflect on what it means to you now. Use the structure and the checklist of the section above.

30. ●● Speaking. Long turn: talk for two minutes about *a place where you felt completely calm*. Prepare five key words, not a script; then record yourself and check your timing and your linking expressions.

Towards B2

31. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose A, B, C or D for each gap. *Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855) kept her Grasmere journal from May 1800 to January 1803. (1) ___ she wrote it mainly for herself and for William, it was published only long after her death. Her entries are short and (2) ___ detailed: the weather, the plants, the people she met (3) ___ her walks. William often (4) ___ her pages before writing a poem, and several of his images (5) ___ from her notes. Today many readers find her prose (6) ___ as fresh as his verse.* 1 A Despite B Although C However D Even · 2 A extremely B absolutely C hardly D much · 3 A while B meanwhile C during D through · 4 A read B was reading C has read D reads · 5 A take B derive C base D make · 6 A very B just C rather D fairly

32. ●● Open cloze. Write one word in each gap. *Coleridge was one of the most brilliant talkers of his age, but he found it hard to finish (1) ___ he started. Many of his projects were never completed, and some of his best poems were published (2) ___ years after he had written them. In 1816 he moved into the house of a doctor in Highgate, (3) ___ helped him to control his addiction. It was (4) ___ that he spent the last eighteen years of his life. Young writers came to listen to him, (5) ___ he could talk for hours (6) ___ stopping.*

33. ●●● Word formation. Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits the gap. *In the late eighteenth century the Lake District became (1) ___ (INCREASE) popular with (2) ___ (TOUR). The (3) ___ (PICTURE) taste of the time taught visitors to admire wild (4) ___ (SCENE) as if it were a painting. In the 1840s the old Wordsworth protested against a railway to Windermere, because he feared that crowds of trippers would (5) ___ (DANGER) the (6) ___ (TRANQUIL) of the valleys.*

34. ●●● Key-word transformations. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in capitals. Use two to five words, including the word given. a Nobody but Dorothy kept a journal. ONLY — Dorothy ___ who kept a journal. b I had almost no time to visit the museum. HARDLY — I had ___ to visit the museum. c The sailors were so thirsty that they could not speak at all. EVEN — The sailors were so thirsty that they ___ speak. d The path was steeper than I had expected. RATHER — The path was ___ than I had expected. e It is completely impossible to see the summit today. QUITE — It is ___ to see the summit today. f He seldom walks in the fells now. HARDLY — He ___ in the fells now.

Glossario del capitolo

Archaism
arcaismo — a word or form that was already old-fashioned when the text was written, used for effect: *dropt*, *'twas*, *yea*.

Chiasmus
chiasmo — a crossed, mirror structure ABBA: "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down".

Continental System
Blocco continentale — Napoleon's attempt, from 1806, to close the ports of Europe to British trade.

Conversation poem
poesia colloquiale — Coleridge's meditative blank-verse poem addressed to a friend or a child, e.g. "Frost at Midnight".

Degree adverb
avverbio di grado — an adverb that says "how much": *fairly, quite, rather, very, absolutely, hardly*.

Fancy
fantasia (combinatoria) — for Coleridge, the power that only combines images already supplied by memory.

Focusing adverb
avverbio focalizzante — an adverb that points at one part of the sentence: *only, even, just, also*.

Glacial trough
valle glaciale (a U) — a valley deepened and widened by a glacier, with steep sides and a flat floor.

Imagination
immaginazione — for Coleridge, the creative power that dissolves and fuses images into a new, living whole.

Internal rhyme
rima interna — a rhyme inside a single line: "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew".

Lake Poets
poeti dei Laghi — a critics' label for Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, who lived in the Lake District.

Long turn
monologo, turno lungo — a speaking task in which one person talks alone, without interruption, for a set time.

Marginal gloss
glossa a margine — a prose comment printed beside a text; Coleridge added one to the *Rime* in 1817.

Onomatopoeia
onomatopea — the use of words whose sound imitates their meaning: *splash, hiss, rustle*.

Poetic diction
linguaggio poetico convenzionale — the artificial language of much eighteenth-century verse, rejected by Wordsworth's Preface.

Reflective essay
saggio riflessivo — a personal essay that moves from describing an experience to reflecting on its meaning.

Speenhamland system
sistema di Speenhamland — from 1795, wages topped up from the poor rate according to the price of bread.

Spots of time
«momenti privilegiati» — in *The Prelude*, vivid moments of the past whose memory renews the mind.

Ungradable adjective
aggettivo non graduabile — an extreme or absolute adjective (*freezing, perfect*) used with *absolutely*, not *very*.

Willing suspension of disbelief
sospensione volontaria dell'incredulità — Coleridge's phrase for the reader's acceptance, while reading, of the impossible.

Soluzioni

1. A (anonymously, in the autumn of 1798; the Preface came with the second edition, dated 1800).

2. C ("to give the charm of novelty to things of every day"; A was Coleridge's own task).

3. D (fancy only combines; C describes the imagination).

4. a F — enclosure reached a peak during the wars, when grain prices were high; the General Enclosure Act (1801) made it easier. b T. c T. d F — he walked across France in 1790 and lived there in 1791–1792 (and visited again in 1802). e F — written around 1797–1800, it was published only in 1816. f T (July 1850, a few months after his death).

5. *Lyrical Ballads* — both — 1798; "Tintern Abbey" — Wordsworth — 1798; *Biographia Literaria* — Coleridge — 1817; *The Prelude* — Wordsworth — 1850; "Kubla Khan" — Coleridge — 1816; *Guide to the Lakes* — Wordsworth — 1810.

6. a 1804. b 1799 (December). c 1805 (21 October). d 1806. e 1815 (18 June). f 1843.

7. Model answer: In 1790–1792 the young Wordsworth travelled and lived in France and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Revolution, which seemed the dawn of a new age of liberty. The war between Britain and France (1793), the Terror and the French conquests divided and disappointed him. He looked for hope in nature and in ordinary people, and he slowly became a conservative, accepting a government post in 1813. (67 words)

8. a The artificial, decorative language of much eighteenth-century poetry (periphrases, conventional personifications), rejected in the Preface: e.g. "the finny tribe" for fish. b In *The Prelude*, moments from the past, often childhood, so vivid that remembering them renews and repairs the mind; e.g. the poet's memories of the fells as a boy. c Coleridge's phrase (*Biographia*, ch. XIV) for the reader's decision, while reading, to accept the impossible as if it were true: e.g. accepting the spirits and the curse in the *Rime*. d A meditative blank-verse poem addressed to a friend or a child, which moves from a quiet scene to deep thoughts and back: e.g. "Frost at Midnight".

9. B.

10. a On the shore of a lake, under the trees, along the edge of a bay. b To the stars of the Milky Way: they are as continuous and countless. c The daffodils, which dance with more joy than the waves. d On his couch (sofa), in an empty or thoughtful mood; the memory of the daffodils flashes into his mind, and his heart fills with pleasure and "dances" with them.

11. "dancing" became "golden" (colour instead of a repeated verb; "golden" prepares the image of "wealth"); "Along" became "Beside"; line 6 became "Fluttering and dancing in the breeze". The number "Ten thousand" moved to the new stanza 2 (l. 11, "Ten thousand saw I at a glance"), where it is linked to the stars. Preferences may differ: the 1815 version is richer and more visual; some readers prefer the speed and simplicity of 1807.

12. l. 3: *when ALL at ONCE i SAW a CROWD* — 8 syllables, 4 stresses. l. 17: *i GAZED — and GAZED — but LITtle THOUGHT* — 8 syllables, 4 stresses. Stanza 3 rhymes *ababcc* (*they / glee / gay / company / thought / brought*); the weakest rhyme is *glee / company*, which rhymes only on the unstressed final syllable of *company*.

13. Possible answers: a to add some imagination to the way the events are told, so that ordinary things look new and strange. b a strong feeling that you remember later, when you are calm. c slowly a new feeling, similar to the original one, starts to grow in the mind.

14. a *dropt*, *'twas*, *yea*, *did stand / did shrink / did crawl* (any two). b l. 107, "Down dropt the breeze, the sails

dropt down". c "As idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean". d "Day after day, day after day" or "Water, water, every where" (twice). e ll. 119–122: water everywhere, but none to drink. f *abcb* (*day / motion / ship / ocean*: only lines 2 and 4 rhyme).

15. Traccia: *Point*: in T1 nature is a friend that gives joy and company; in T3 it becomes an enemy that punishes. *Evidence*: the daffodils "dance" in "glee" and later fill the poet's heart with "pleasure"; in T3 the sun is "bloody", the sky "copper", and "The very deep did rot". *Explanation*: Wordsworth's nature is real and familiar, and its effect lasts in memory; Coleridge's is also physically precise, but the ordinary elements — wind, sun, sea — become supernatural agents of revenge for the killing of the albatross. Both poets show that the relation between human beings and nature has moral weight.

16. a The farmers (*agricolas*), happy beyond measure — but only "if they knew their blessings" (*sua si bona norint*): they are fortunate without knowing it. b The earth, "most just", gives them an easy living from the soil, and they live far from war ("the clash of arms"). c Traccia: *similarity* — both poets, writing in wartime, see country life as closer to what is lasting and natural (Wordsworth's "beautiful and permanent forms of nature"). *Difference* — Virgil praises his farmers from outside and in an ideal picture; Wordsworth lets poor country people speak, and they tell of hardship and loss (Michael's debt, his son and his land).

17. C.

18. A (the adverb cannot go between the verb and its object).

19. D (*breathtaking* is an extreme adjective: not *very*, *fairly* or *a bit*).

20. a absolutely. b fairly. c quite. d hardly. e rather (*rather too long*). f very. (a and c may also be swapped: *quite freezing* is possible but less common, and *absolutely right* is correct; b is always *fairly*, which fits no other gap.)

21. a *Only Dorothy wrote about the daffodils on 15 April 1802.* b *Dorothy wrote only about the daffodils on 15 April 1802.* c *Dorothy wrote about the daffodils only on 15 April 1802.* d *Dorothy only wrote about the daffodils on 15 April 1802* (in speech, with stress on *wrote*).

22. a *We visited Dove Cottage yesterday.* b *The lake was absolutely enormous / very big*. c *I could hardly believe it.* d *She speaks English very well.* e *He has also written a guidebook.* f *It was quite a cold morning* (or *a fairly / rather cold morning*).

23. a *Wordsworth often composed his poems aloud.* b *Coleridge was often ill.* c *They walked slowly to Grasmere in the evening* (manner, place, time). d *The guide didn't even know the answer.* e *Wordsworth's poems have also been translated into Italian* (after the first auxiliary).

24. a *There was hardly any wind.* b *Dorothy hardly ever missed a day in her journal.* c *Hardly anyone spoke on the walk to the tarn.* d *The sailors had barely any water left.*

25. a *Only in 1850 could the public read* The Prelude (inversion after *only* + time expression) / *The public could only read* The Prelude *in 1850.* b *The walk was rather (quite) long, but the view was absolutely wonderful / magnificent.* c *I could hardly see the path, and there wasn't even a shelter (hut).*

26. a fell. b vivid. c meadow. d glimpse. e recollect. f tranquil.

27. a rustled. b creaked. c roared. d splashed. e murmured. f creaked.

28. 1 d (vivid memory) · 2 f (tranquil evening) · 3 e (steep slope) · 4 a (catch a glimpse) · 5 b (powerful feelings) · 6 c (spontaneous overflow). Sentences: open.

29. Guidance: four paragraphs — a precise opening scene (age, place, a person, a detail of the senses); description in past tenses; a clear reflection introduced by a phrase such as *Looking back* or *I didn't realise then that…*, in present tenses; an ending that returns to the place. Check the word count, the paragraphing, the tense change and at least two adverbs of degree or focus used precisely. Avoid clichés such as "an unforgettable experience".

30. Model answer: "I'd like to talk about a small beach near my grandparents' house in Liguria. It

happened when I was about twelve. It was a grey morning in October, the tourists had gone, and I went down to the sea alone, quite early, before breakfast. At first I was just bored: no friends, no phone signal, nothing to do. Then I sat on a rock and started to listen. I can still hear the waves pulling the pebbles back, a kind of long rustle, and a boat creaking somewhere. What I remember most vividly is that I stopped thinking about school, about my marks, about everything. I stayed there for nearly an hour, and nobody came. Looking back, I realise that it was the first time I had been completely alone and happy at the same time. Since then, whenever I feel stressed before a test, I close my eyes and try to hear those pebbles again. It doesn't always work, but it hardly ever fails completely. So that's why, for me, calm is not silence: it's a particular sound." (about two minutes)

31. 1 B. 2 A. 3 C. 4 A. 5 B. 6 B.

32. 1 what (anything). 2 many (several, some, only). 3 who. 4 there. 5 and (as, because, for, since). 6 without.

33. 1 increasingly. 2 tourists. 3 picturesque. 4 scenery. 5 endanger. 6 tranquillity.

34. a was the only one (person). b hardly any time. c could not / couldn't even. d rather steeper. e quite impossible. f hardly ever walks.