

The Ball Poem

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Thinking about the Poem

In pairs, attempt the following questions:

1. Why does the poet say, "I would not intrude on him"? Why doesn't he offer him money to buy another ball?

Answer: The poet wants the boy to experience the loss. He should learn that it is the part of life. That's why the poet doesn't want to interfere the boy and doesn't want to offer him money to buy another ball.

2. "... staring down/All his young days into the harbour where/His ball went..." Do you think the boy has had the ball for a long time? Is it linked to the memories of days when he played with it?

Answer: Yes, it seems like the boy has had the ball for a long time. When it bounced into the water, all his memories of the days of childhood flashed in front of him. This led to a realisation that those moments would not come back, just like the ball. He can buy new balls and can similarly create new moments, but those that are gone would not return.

3. What does "in the world of possessions" mean?

Answer: In the world of possessions' means people like to possess all sorts of things in the world. Money is external because it can buy only material objects; it cannot buy everything that one loses.

4. Do you think the boy has lost anything earlier? Pick out the words that suggest the answer.

Answer: No, it seems that the boy had not lost anything earlier. The words that suggest so are 'senses first responsibility in a world of possessions'.

5. What does the poet say the boy is learning from the loss of the ball?

Try to explain this in your own words.

Answer: The poet says that the boy is learning to cope up with the loss of the ball. He is experiencing grief and learning to grow up in this world of possessions. He learns that there are so many things in life that are to be lost and cannot be brought back. It is useless to feel sorrow for it.