

Reading extract and questions:
Year 5/6

My Shadow
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Set A/B

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.



Questions for *My Shadow* Set A

Vocabulary:

1. *I have a **little** shadow...*

Which of the words below would **not** be a suitable replacement for the word *little*?

small

tiny

miniature

gargantuan

Tick one.

2. Look at the second verse. Which verb tells us that the shadow can grow very quickly?

3. *And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way...*

Which group of words is closest in meaning to **make a fool of me**? **Circle one.**

make me fall over

make me look silly

transform me into a fool

Retrieval

4. **Find and copy the line** that shows the poet does not think his shadow is very helpful to him.

5. Look at the first two verses. **Find and copy a group of words** that shows that the poet is amused by his shadow.

6. What does the shadow do that makes the poet think it is worried about lots of things?

Inference

7. Does the poet like his shadow?

Circle one: yes no

Explain your answer, referring to the text.

8. Look at the first verse. Why does the shadow jump into the bed first?

Because it is a coward.

Because the poet is between a light source and the bed.

Tick one.

Because it is always sleepy.

Because it is no use.

9. What impressions do you get of the shadow in the poem?

Give two impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
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Summarise

10. Which verse describes the shadow disappearing? **Circle one.**

verse 1

verse 2

verse 3

verse 4

Meaning as a whole

11. How do you think the shadow is most likely to describe the poet? **Tick one**, then **explain** your answer.

boring

brave

Tick one.

Vocabulary

1. *He hasn't got a notion*

In this line the word *notion* is closest in meaning to...

memory

plan

Tick one.

idea

picture

2. Look at the third verse. What does the poet mean by the word *nursie*? **Circle one.**

his mother

a doctor

his nanny

his special teddy

3. Look at the final verse. **Find and copy one** word that means the same as *idle*.

Retrieval

4. Look at the second verse. Explain why the poet writes that the shadow does not grow '*like proper children*'.

5. Using information from the poem, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.

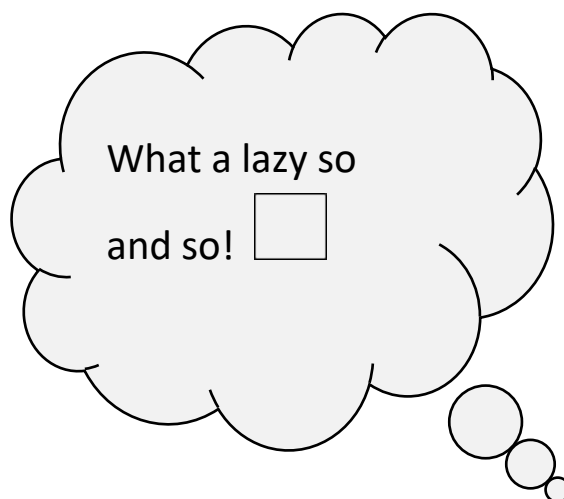
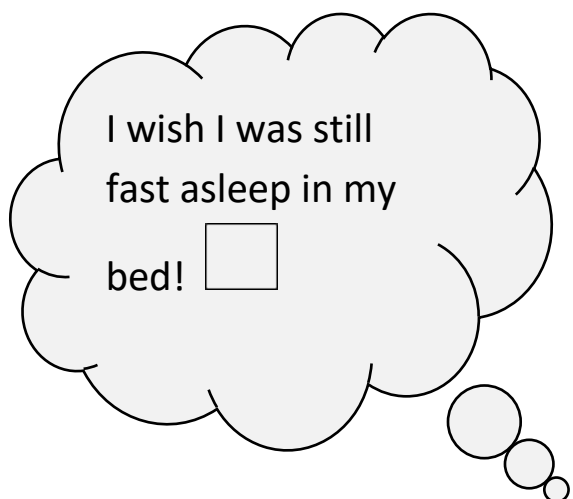
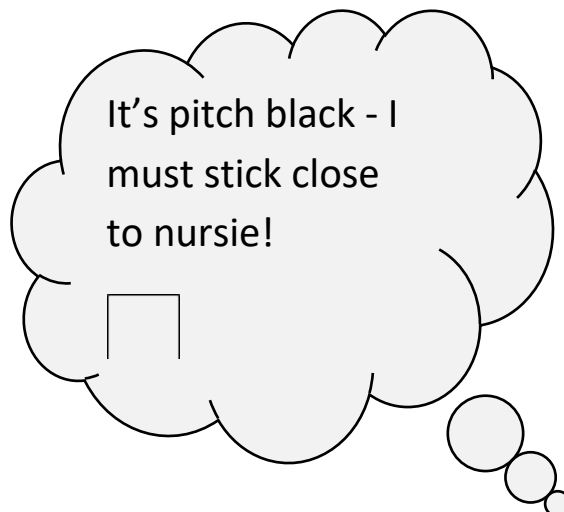
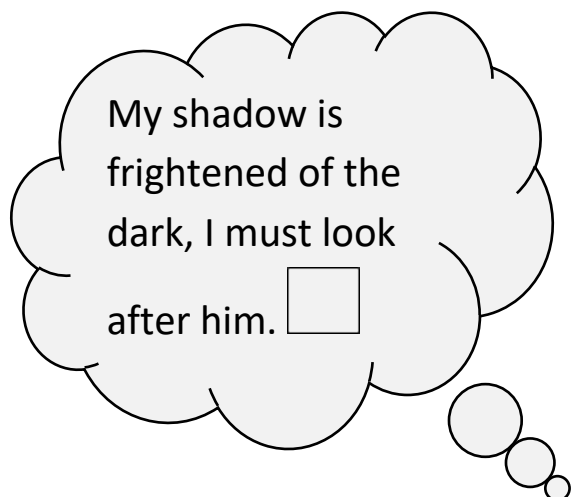
	True	False
The shadow can talk.		
The shadow changes size.		
The shadow plays with a rubber ball.		

Inference

6. Why does the poet describe the shadow as a coward?

7. What does the poet think when he gets up very early one morning?

Tick **one** thought.



Summarise

8. What is the main point Robert Louis Stevenson is trying to make about his shadow in the final verse?

That shadows are lazy.

That shadows cannot be seen when the sun is not out.

That shadows find it hard to get up in the morning.

That shadows are not brave.

Tick two.

Meaning as a whole

9. Imagine the poet is writing a diary entry about his shadow. Write a section of the diary in your own words, drawing on ideas from the text.

23rd May

Dear Diary,

Authorial intent

10. Why do you think the poet, Robert Louis Stevenson, chose to use *personification* to write about his shadow?

Compare

11. Look at the whole of the poem. What do you think would be the best thing about being a shadow-boy?

Explain your answer.

Answers for My Shadow

Set A:

Vocabulary:

1. gargantuan
2. shoots
3. make me look silly

Retrieval:

4. And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
5. The funniest things about him (is the way he likes to grow) (accept any answers rooted in the poem that could be seen as amusing.)
6. Stays close beside him / acts like a coward

Inference:

7. Pupils could select either Yes or No, but must justify their opinion using the text.

E.g.
Yes: Because he finds the shadow funny / because he changes size / because he is very like him
No: Because he has no use / because he jumps into bed first / because he doesn't grow like proper children / because he doesn't know how children should play / because he makes the poet feel like a fool / because he is a coward / because he is lazy and doesn't get up early

8. Because the poet is between a light source and the bed.

9.

Impression: The shadow is mischievous / cheeky / fun.

Evidence: He changes size / he makes a fool of the poet / he jumps into bed first

Impression: The shadow is scared.

Evidence: He acts in a cowardly way / he sticks close by the poet most of the time

Impression: He is lazy.

Impression: Because he jumps into bed first / because he stays in bed when the poet gets up early

Summarise:

10. verse 4

Meaning as a whole:

11. Pupils could select either option but must justify their opinion using the text.

E.g.
Boring – because the poet can't change size / doesn't like being made a fool of / is always too slow getting into bed / he grows too slowly
Brave – because he doesn't stay close to other people / because he gets up in the dark early mornings

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Answers for My Shadow

Set B:

Vocabulary:

1. idea
2. his nanny
3. lazy

Retrieval:

4. He sometimes shoots up taller than an India rubber ball / He sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all / He changes shape and size and children don't / Shadows can sometimes be tall or little and children can't

5.

The shadow can talk – False

The shadow changes size – True

The shadow plays with a rubber ball – False

Inference:

6.

Because he stays so close to him (his owner/the poet)

Because he would be ashamed to stay so close to his nurse as his shadow stays to him

7. That lazy, so and so!

8. That shadows cannot be seen when the sun is not out.

Meaning as a whole:

9. Pupils should reference the different elements of the poem – e.g. he realised that his shadow changes size, wasn't present when he got up early before the sun got up, stays close to him at other times, made a fool of him, was useless and jumped into bed first.

Authorial intent

10.

E.g. Because the shadow is human-shaped / because it seems to have a life of its own / because it is a companion to the poet / because it moves around, for instance getting into bed.

Compare

11. Pupils may choose a range of answers. E.g. being able to change size and shape; being able to grow quickly (or shrink); being able to stay in bed rather than getting up on early, dark mornings; being able to stay close to someone for comfort/protection; being able to jump into bed first.

Accept other justifiable explanations.

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