

## 2 POEM

*Frost at Midnight* was composed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in February 1798 and first published in April of that same year in a pamphlet collection called *Fears in Solitude*. Composed during the industrial revolution – which was

characterised by rapid urbanisation and mechanisation – *Frost at Midnight* meditates on the difference between life in the city and life in the countryside.

### 7 Get a first idea

Read stanza 1 from the fragment of *Frost at Midnight* on page 179 of your *Textbook* and answer the questions in English.

- 1 In stanza 1 the speaker reflects on his birthplace in the countryside during his schooldays in the city. How does the speaker feel about being at school at that moment? Write down three words or phrases from the text where this becomes apparent.

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- 2 If you could choose between living in the city or in the countryside, which would you prefer, and why? Write down your answer in two or three sentences. Then discuss your ideas with a classmate.

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### 8 Theme

Now read the whole fragment of *Frost at Midnight* on page 179 of your *Textbook* and answer the questions.

- 1 Who is the speaker addressing in stanza 2?

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- 2 Why does the speaker mention 'the sky and the stars'?

- A  He did not learn to fully appreciate their beauty until he moved away to the countryside.  
B  Pollution prevented him from admiring them during his life in the city but he enjoys them now.  
C  While growing up in the city, they were the only natural features he could actually see.

- 3 Keeping the theme 'City versus Countryside' in the back of your mind, explain in your own words what the speaker is trying to say when he says 'It fills my heart [...] far other scenes'.

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### 9 Form

Reread the poem and focus on its form. *Frost at Midnight* is written in what is called 'blank verse'. What are the characteristics of this form? Study the poem and indicate whether the statements are true or false. Blank verse ...

	true	false
contains rhyme		
has eight syllables per line		
has the same number of unstressed syllables for each line		

### 10 Language

Reread the fragment of the poem and focus on the language Coleridge uses.

- 1 In the lines starting with 'But thou, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze' until 'And mountain crags; so shalt thou see and hear' the speaker makes use of **repetition**. Write down the words that are repeated in these lines.

➔ **Reference** Literary terms, *repetition*, page 294 of your *Textbook*.

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- 2 What effect does this repetition have on you as the reader?

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- 3 Explain in your own words what the speaker means with 'Which image in their bulk'.

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