

7- Poem Comprehension

Grade 4

Clouds

by Christina Rossetti

White sheep, white sheep,

On a blue hill,

When the wind stops

You all stand still.

When the wind blows

You walk away slow.

White sheep, white sheep,

Where do you go?

Into the air

Like steps of stairs,

You make a white track

High up there.

Growing bigger,

Growing dim—

I watch you change

To dots, then swim

Away in the blue

Till next time I see

New white sheep

Grazing the sky-sea.

1. What are the "white sheep" in this poem?

2. How does the poet compare clouds to sheep? List two similarities.

3. What happens to the clouds when:

a) the wind stops?

b) the wind blows?

4. What does "grazing the sky-sea" mean?

5. How do the clouds change as the poet watches them?

6. Why does the poet use "sky-sea" instead of just "sky"?

7. Find words from the poem that show:

- a) movement _____
- b) size change _____
- c) visibility change _____

8. The poet uses these pairs of words. Explain what each pair means:

a) "bigger" and "dim"

b) "white sheep" and "sky-sea"

9. What picture does "like steps of stairs" create in your mind?

10. Find and write:

a) Two adjectives from the poem

b) Two verbs that show movement

c) Two words that show direction

11. In the line "You all stand still," what kind of word is 'all'?

12. Change this line to past tense:

"You walk away slow"

Creative Thinking

17. If clouds could think, what would they think about while floating in the sky? Write a short paragraph.

18. Imagine you are a cloud. Write a diary entry about your day floating across the sky. What did you see below?

Answer Key

Comprehension:

1. The "white sheep" are clouds in the sky
2. Like sheep, clouds:
 - Are white and fluffy
 - Move slowly
 - Gather in groups
 - Seem to graze across the sky
3. a) They stand still
b) They move away slowly
4. The clouds appear to be moving across the sky as sheep would graze in a field
5. They grow bigger, become dim, turn into dots, then swim away
6. The sky is vast and blue like the sea, creating a mirror image above
7. (walk, swim), (bigger), (dim)
8. a) Shows how clouds can appear larger but fade away
b) Compares white clouds to sheep and the sky to a sea
9. Clouds appear to form stepping stones or stairs going up into the sky
10. a) white, blue
b) walk, swim
c) away, up
11. 'all' is used as a pronoun
12. "You walked away slow"