

Reading Comprehension 10- Poem
Grade 5

Where the Sidewalk Ends

By Shel Silverstein

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And there the grass grows soft and white,
And there the sun burns crimson bright,
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight
To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
And the dark street winds and bends.

Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And watch where the chalk-white arrows go
To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know
The place where the sidewalk ends.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is described as growing "soft and white" in the poem?
2. What color is the sun in this imaginary place?
3. What creature is mentioned in the first stanza?
4. What kind of wind is described in the first stanza?
5. How does the poem describe the smoke in the real world?
6. What unusual flowers are mentioned in the second stanza?

7. How are the children walking to this special place?
8. According to the poem, who knows where this special place is?
9. What do you think "where the sidewalk ends" might represent?
 - How would you describe the difference between the place "where the sidewalk ends" and the city streets?

Vocabulary Questions

- What does "crimson" mean in the poem?
- What does "measured" mean in "a walk that is measured and slow"?
- What are "pits" as mentioned in the second stanza?
- What does "asphalt" refer to in the poem?
- What might "chalk-white arrows" refer to in the poem?

Grammar Questions

- Find an example of alliteration in the first stanza.
- In the line "And there the moon-bird rests from his flight," what is the subject and the verb?
- The phrase "moon-bird" is what kind of word?
- Find the contrasting words or phrases that show differences between the city and the magical place.
- What is the pattern of repetition at the beginning of several lines in the poem? What is this device called?

Answer Key

Comprehension Answers

1. The grass is described as growing "soft and white."
2. The sun is crimson (bright red) in color.
3. The "moon-bird" is mentioned in the first stanza.
4. A "peppermint wind" is described.
5. The smoke in the real world is described as "black."
6. "Asphalt flowers" are mentioned.
7. The children are walking "with a walk that is measured and slow."
8. The children know where this special place is.
9. "Where the sidewalk ends" might represent imagination, freedom from city life, nature, or a magical/fantasy world. (Accept reasonable interpretations)
- The city is described as dark, smoky, and winding while the special place is bright, clean, magical, and natural. (Accept reasonable comparisons)

Vocabulary Answers

- "Crimson" means deep red in color.
- "Measured" in this context means deliberate, careful, or steady.
- "Pits" refers to holes or depressions in the ground.
- "Asphalt" refers to the black substance used to pave roads and sidewalks.
- "Chalk-white arrows" might refer to children's chalk drawings on sidewalks, signs pointing the way, or symbolic guides to imagination. (Accept reasonable interpretations)

Grammar Answers

- "Peppermint wind" is an example of alliteration (repetition of the 'p' sound).
- Subject: "the moon-bird"; Verb: "rests"
- "Moon-bird" is a compound word (combining two words to create a new word).
- Contrasting elements: "grass grows soft and white" vs. "smoke blows black"; "sun burns crimson bright" vs. "dark street"; "peppermint wind" vs. "asphalt." (Any valid contrast)

- The repetition of "And there" at the beginning of lines is called anaphora.

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