

Name _____

Class _____

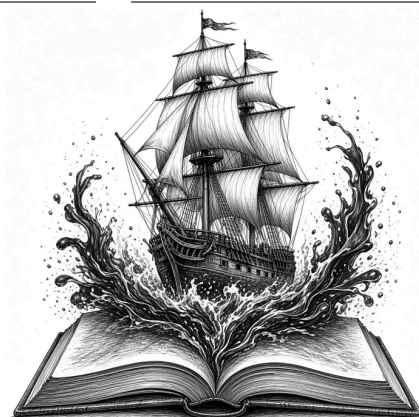
Date _____

There Is No Frigate Like a Book

by Emily Dickinson

Grades 5–8 · Common Core RL.6.4, RL.6.2, RL.6.5

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) wrote nearly 1,800 poems, most published after her death. This poem uses two quatrains of common meter, alternating lines of eight and six syllables, like a hymn.



THE POEM

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
5 This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

VOCABULARY

frigate — a fast sailing warship**coursers** — swift horses**prancing** — moving with high, lively steps**traverse** — a journey across something**toll** — a fee paid to travel on a road or bridge**frugal** — inexpensive, thrifty**chariot** — a horse-drawn carriage

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What three vehicles does Dickinson compare books and poetry to?

2. What does “To take us lands away” mean?

3. Why does Dickinson call poetry “prancing”?

4. According to lines 5–6, who can make this journey, and what does it cost?

5. What is the “chariot” in line 7, and what does it carry?

WRITING PROMPT

Write an eight-line poem that compares something you love (music, a game, a sport) to a form of travel. Keep the comparison going through the whole poem.

There Is No Frigate Like a Book — Answer Key

1. A frigate (ship), coursers (horses) and a chariot.
2. Books carry readers to faraway places in their imagination.
3. Poetry has rhythm and energy, like a lively horse lifting its feet; it is a “courser” that moves quickly and joyfully.
4. “the poorest” can take it “Without oppress of toll”: reading costs nothing, so anyone can travel this way.
5. The book (reading) is the chariot; it “bears a human soul”, carrying the reader’s mind and spirit.

Read the full poem online: poetrycatalog.com/there-is-no-frigate-like-a-book-emily-dickinson/