When Power Fades
A Literature-Based Lesson on Ozymandias

INTRODUCTION

Statues are put up to pay tribute to major historical figures who contributed significantly to a society. In the Philippines, several statues, mostly of heroes, are found in Manila and in various places to honor and remember great men and women who lived extraordinary lives.

For some strange reason, however, there are people who build statues for themselves. Perhaps, for fear of being forgotten, these leaders put up monuments in order for future generations to recognize that those faces carved in stone once walked on earth.

Based on a poem written by an English poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, this literature-based lesson plan aims at increasing students’ critical thinking and raising their social awareness through various literary activities. Considering that the general theme of the poem cuts across time and culture, the lesson plan is crafted in hopes of making students recognize the transitoriness and vanity of political powers, and relating the poem to the practices of political leaders that mirror the issues and concerns raised in the poem.

It is projected that the lesson plan will be accomplished in two one-hour sessions.
LESSON PLAN ON OZYMANDIAS

I. Objectives
   A. Expressive
      1. Recognize that political powers come to an end.
      2. Identify traits and characteristics of a leader that endure.
      3. Show appreciation to the literary style of the poem.
   B. Instructional
      1. Unlock vocabulary words through different unlocking strategies.
      2. Respond to the poem by:
         a. describing the characteristics of Ozymandias through a character sketch;
         b. creating a visual representation of Ozymandias’ statue before and after it was destroyed;
         c. exploring the possibility that Ozymandias’ statue’s destruction was man-made and detailing out the cause of the statue’s destruction through an interview with the culprits;
         d. concretizing the irony of the poem as one infers through observers’ thoughts with the use of thought bubbles; and
         e. relating Ozymandias’ dilemma to the current practices of politicians.
      3. List down remarkable traits and characteristics that leaders must rather embody.
      4. Write a poem similar to Ozymandias.

II. Subject Matter
    Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

III. Materials
    visual aids, handouts/worksheets, Viva La Vida audio file, audio player, LCD projector, computer
### IV. Procedure

#### DAY 1

**A. Pre-reading**

1. **Unlocking of Difficulties**
   a. Teacher presents the following words. In their own words, students provide the meaning of the vocabulary items with the help of different strategies (demonstration, picture, and context clue).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Phrase</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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| Visage      | facial expression | demonstration  
(Teacher demonstrates different facial expressions that convey strong emotions, e.g. jubilant, mournful, angry, annoyed, surprised, disappointed, etc.) |
| sneer       | a scornful facial expression | demonstration  
(Teacher demonstrates a contemptuous look by slightly raising one corner of the upper lip.) |
| pedestal    | an elevated place; an architectural base or support | picture  
Teacher's question: What's the primary use of a pedestal? |
| Despair     | to lose all hope | context clue  
Trina shook her head in **despair** after learning that she didn’t pass the Math test for the third time. She knew that that exam was her last chance.  
**Teacher’s question:** What causes you to despair?
Standing 30-foot tall, Lapu-lapu's colossal statue at Luneta never fails to elicit awe from tourists.

**Teacher's question:** What colossal structure have you seen recently?

b. Teacher asks students to use the vocabulary words in sentences.

2. **Schema Activation**
   a. Teacher asks some students what their favorite songs are and what made them like those songs.
   b. Teacher explains briefly that songs have different genre, and a song that tells a story is called a lyrical narrative song.
   c. Before playing the song of Coldplay entitled, Viva La Vida, teacher briefs the students what they are about to hear. She also provides guide questions prior to listening:
      - Who is the persona in the song?
      - Prior to his current state, how do you describe the persona?
      - What is the persona’s dilemma?
   d. Teacher distributes worksheets (see Appendix A). The audio file will be played twice. Students are asked to read through the lyrics before the first playing. While listening, students have to provide the missing words. During the second playing, students can review or revise their answers.
   e. After the second playing, teacher calls on students to recite the answers.
   f. Teacher goes back to the questions she mentioned before the audio file was played.
      - Who is the persona in the song?
        The persona could be a ruler or a king.
      - Prior to his current state, how was the persona described?
        People feared him, for he was an experienced and skilled ruler. He was esteemed and revered by his constituents.
      - What is the persona’s dilemma?
        A strange twist of fate turned the king into a lowly and despised citizen. His people regarded him with animosity.
   g. Teacher explains the song’s relevance to the poem they are about to read; the relevance of the song to the poem students have to find out.

   **Personal note:** Both the poem and the song detail that no matter how mighty the leaders were in their own era, there will come a time when their power and influence decline.

3. **Developing a Purpose for Reading**
   a. Motivation Question
      Recall a well-known local or international personality across time. What made that person famous?
   b. Motive Question
      How does the king in the poem endeavor to be remembered?
B. During Reading

Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Teacher distributes the copy of the poem.
First reading: read aloud (Teacher models how the poem should be read.)
Teacher explains to students that for them to appreciate the poem better, the poem
should be read in meaningful chunks. (The prose version of the poem is in Appendix B.)

Second reading: read along (Teacher and students read the poem together.)

(For the copy of the poem, see Appendix C.)

C. Post Reading: Part 1

1. Engagement Activities

**CLASS ACTIVITY**

a. Why is the poem entitled Ozymandias? *The poem is about a king whose name is Ozymandias.*

b. What do you notice with the poem? How many lines does it have? *14 lines*

c. What is a poem with 14 lines called? *Sonnet*

d. Who is the persona in the poem? *I/ The one who recounts the story of a traveller*

e. How is the traveller related to the persona? *Maybe the traveller is just a mere acquaintance of the persona.*

f. What literary device did Shelley use to develop the poem? *I*rony

g. Why did you say that it is irony? *I*rony implies a meaning opposite to the literal meaning.

h. Read the specific lines which support your assertion.

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My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away
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i. Teacher asks: Now let us go back to the question I raised earlier on. How does the king in the poem endeavor to be remembered? *He thought of putting up a monument for himself for future generations to remember the dominion he once owned and the kingdom he once ruled.*

j. Planning and Practice

- Each group will have six members. There are permanent groupings in the class.
- Teacher distributes the group activities that students have to work on (see activities below). She explains the procedure. She also clarifies information and entertains questions students might have.
- Students have to use the remaining minutes to do their activities.

**ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY 1:** Long Live the Pharaoh!

Pretend that you are servants in Ozymandias’ palace. Make a character sketch by
telling a little story about one remarkable encounter you had with him. Describe how
the pharaoh’s is dressed. Describe the pharaoh’s gestures or facial expressions.
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY 2: Before and After
In the poem, the traveller opened the narration by saying that there are “two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand[ing] in the desert.” Create a before and after look of Ozymandias’ statue. How does Ozymandias’ face look like?

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY 3: Sherlock Holmes-ish Investigation
The cause of Ozymandias’ statue’s crumbling was not mentioned. As a first-rate investigator who travelled from the present to the ancient period, you found out that it was toppled down by an anti-Ozymandias group. After asking some local residents, you discovered who the culprits were. What could be the reason of those people for knocking down the poor statue? Interview them, and then create a transcript of the interview.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY 4: Ironic inscription, huh?
You were tourists who visited the wreckage of Ozymandias’ statue. What are your reactions after reading the inscription: “My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: ye mighty, and despair!” Write your reactions in the thought bubbles.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY 5: History repeats itself
Think of at least three things that politicians do to “immortalize” themselves. In what ways are the politicians and Ozymandias alike?
DAY 2

Post Reading: Part 2
Teacher and students quickly reviews the lesson. Students are given 15 more minutes to continue doing their tasks.

1. Engagement Activity Discussion
   a. Long Live the Pharaoh!
      - How do you describe the Pharaoh? Suggested answer: The Pharaoh is a cruel man. People fear him, but not out of respect. In fact, people call him a tyrant. He sometimes makes unreasonable commands. He wants to be served. Even children and women are forced to work for him and his family.
      - What was your encounter with him? Suggested answer: He would easily be angry. One time, we heard that one servant was caught stealing a fruit. The servant was begging for mercy and forgiveness. What the Pharaoh did instead was to ask somebody to cut off the servant’s tongue before drowning the servant in the Nile River.
      - How did you come up with such descriptions? Reading between the poem’s lines, Shelley implied that the Pharaoh was arrogant and heartless.

Thank you, Group 1. Now let’s see Group 2’s work. They were asked to make a visual representation of Ozymandias’ statue before and after.

b. Before and After
   - Can you tell us what you have there?

![BEFORE](image1) ![AFTER](image2)

   - Describe to the class how the group came up with that idea. Since we thought that Ozymandias was a mighty warrior and a revered king during his time, there must have been a proud look on his face. His body perhaps was well-sculpted. However, because of unknown reasons, Ozymandias’ statue fell into pieces. Shelley wrote vividly that what remains are “trunkless legs,” “shattered visage,” and “colossal wreck”. That’s what inspired us to come up with this “after” representation.

That’s good, Group 2. Shelley only described that the once-impressive statue turned into a colossal wreck, but how it became a colossal wreck was not mentioned. Let’s suppose that an anti-Ozymandias group was responsible behind it. What could have caused the smashing up? Let’s listen to Group 3’s findings.

c. Sherlock Holmes-ish investigation
   - Please present the transcript to the class.
   - How do the “interviewees” feel about Ozymandias. They feel hatred towards the king’s unfair and unkind treatment.
What could be the reason behind the tearing down of Ozymandias’ statue? Suggested answer: Their action was spurred by their anger against the ruler whose cruelty made their lives utterly miserable. During his reign, they were enslaved and victimized. Thus, for them, Ozymandias is unworthy of honor and recognition.

Good job, Group 3. Now, what can you say about how the statue is backdropped against the “boundless and bare” desert? Let’s hear it from Group 4.

d. Ironic inscription, huh? Students will have to come up with three to five statements that react to Ozymandias’ claim to fame and the statue’s current state.
- What message does the poem send across? Power and fame are fleeting. It is a futile act to immortalize one’s name by putting up statues and monuments. If one will look at it closely, that act mirrors vanity.
- On the contrary, what characteristics should one possess to make an enduring impact to the society? Answers may vary.

Finally, let’s see how history indeed repeats itself. The last group is going to present the current practices of politicians that resemble Ozymandias’ act.

e. History repeats itself
- What acts of politicians resemble the futile step of Ozymandias? Roads named after the politician’s relative, tarpaulins bearing their faces and names, shameless attribution of a local or national project to a politician, engraving names on bridges, schools, and other infrastructures, among many others.
- What can you say about those actions? Answers may vary.

CLASS ACTIVITY
a. What can be learned from the poem?
b. Can you give examples of notable people who have made it to the top because of their outstanding traits and values? What characteristics set them apart from others? What remarkable traits and characteristics do they embody? How different are they from Ozymandias? Answers may vary.
c. How, then, can you improve yourself to become a better citizen--- a better person? What do you think really matters in this life? Is it money, power, influence, fame, or something else? Answers may vary.
### Viva La Vida
**By Coldplay**

I used to rule the world  
Seas would ___ when I gave the word  
Now in the ___ I sleep alone  
Sweep the streets I used to ___

I used to roll the dice  
___ the fear in my enemy’s eyes  
Listen as the ___ would sing  
"Now the old king is dead! ___ live the king!"

One minute I held the ___  
Next the walls were closed on me  
And I ___ that my castles stand  
Upon pillars of ___ and pillars of sand

**Chorus:**  
I hear Jerusalem ___ a ringing  
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing  
Be my ___, my sword and shield  
My missionaries in a ___ field

For some reason I can’t explain  
Once ___ go there was never  
Never an honest ___  
And that was when I ruled the ___

It was the wicked and wild ___  
Blew down the doors to let me in  
___ windows and the sound of drums  
People couldn’t ___ what I’d become

Revolutionaries wait  
For my ___ on a silver plate  
Just a puppet on a ___ string  
Oh who would ever want to be ___?

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**Chorus (2x):**  
I hear Jerusalem bells a ringing  
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing  
Be my mirror, my sword and shield  
My missionaries in a foreign field

For some reason I can’t explain  
Once you go there was never  
Never an honest word  
And that was when I ruled the world

It was the wicked and wild wind  
Blew down the doors to let me in  
Shattered windows and the sound of drums  
People couldn’t believe what I’d become

Revolutionaries wait  
For my head on a silver plate  
Just a puppet on a lonely string  
Oh who would ever want to be king?
APPENDIX B

Ozymandias (in prose form)
By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land who said: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert. Near them on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown and wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command tell that its sculptor well those passions read which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, the hand that mocked them and the heart that fed. And on the pedestal these words appear: ‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’ Nothing beside remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away.”

APPENDIX C

Ozymandias
By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”