

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: “Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold is a clear expression of the later Victorian Age (1867 or so) when intellectuals were questioning and turning away from many traditional beliefs, but the powerful images and ideas in the poem still speak to us today. The question of where we are to find our “meaning” in the world is one that concerns people in all ages. Answer the questions with brief written responses below and annotate the text of the poem as indicated.

1. What does *faith* mean to you? What are some things you do by faith? Do you consider yourself “faithful”?
2. Mark words in the poem you aren’t familiar with. Use context clues or word cells to discover their meanings.
3. In the right margin next to each stanza, summarize what is being described.
4. Describe the setting. [Put a wavy line under words and phrases that indicate setting.]
5. What do you know about the speaker? [Underline words and phrases that tell you about him.]
6. To whom is the speaker addressing these words? How do you know?
7. Describe the speaker’s tone with a specific adjective. [Put boxes around the words that indicate it.]
8. In the third stanza, the sea becomes a “Sea of Faith.” How do you interpret this? What does it mean that the Sea of Faith is retreating like the tide? What caused it to do so?
9. Draw a horizontal line across the text of the poem to indicate where the mood shifts. How is the imagery above the line different than the imagery below the line?
10. According to the poet, what is the solution to the loss of faith? Do you agree with his conclusion? Why or why not?
11. *F451* -- On a separate page, write a 2-3 paragraph response to this prompt: Montag forces Mildred and her friends to listen to him read “Dover Beach.” Mrs. Phelps begins to cry when she hears it. Why? Using textual evidence from the novel as well as the poem itself, explain why the poem might have such an effect on a person like Mrs. Phelps. (Why does the poem not have the same effect on the other women?)

Dover Beach

The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;--on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Mathew Arnold, 1822-1888