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| **Lesson Title:** Poetry | | **Theme:** Reading | |
| **Practice Activity:** PHL-09-117 | | **Class:** JSS 3 | |
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| **Learning Outcomes**  By the end of the lesson, you will be able to:  1. Explain a prescribed poem in your own words.  2. Answer short questions to draw out concepts from the poem. | | | |

**Overview**

‘The Blind Boy’ is one of the poems for BECE. In the poem, a blind boy asks people to tell him what light looks like. He knows that he will never see light.

The poem is broken up into **stanzas**. Stanzas are like paragraphs in poetry.

In the first stanza, the **repetition** of the exclamation ‘O’ in lines 1 and 4 shows that the blind boy longs to see the light: ‘O, tell your poor blind boy!’

In the second stanza, he recalls some of the information that people have given him:

You talk of wondrous things you see,

You say the sun shines bright.

This means that all he knows about how things look is what people tell him. ‘Wondrous’ means wonderful or beautiful. In the same stanza, we discover that the blind boy can only tell that the sun is shining when he feels the heat or the warmth of the sun. He does not know when it is day or night.

In the third stanza, the blind boy says that he decides that when he is asleep, it is his night, and when he is awake and playing, it is his day:

My day or night myself I make

Whenever I sleep or play;

In the fourth stanza, the blind boy says that he knows people feel sorry for him. He can hear their sighs. To sigh is to breathe out heavily or loudly, especially in response to a sad situation or a situation that cannot change. He says that the people feel sad about his ‘hapless woe’. ‘Hapless woe’ means bad luck or unfortunate situation. In this poem, the boy’s hapless woe is his blindness. He is willing to bear his burden because he was born blind. He cannot feel the loss of sight because he never had sight. This is what he means in:

‘With patience I can bear

A loss I ne’er can know.

In the last stanza, the blind boy knows that he will never see, so he will not allow his blind condition to make him sad:

‘Then let not what I cannot have

My cheer of mind destroy’.

The blind boy keeps himself happy by singing. When he sings, he feels like a king. He is alone in his own kingdom of blindness and considers himself the king of his kingdom. Even though readers may want to feel sorry for the blind boy, the poem is not sad because of the mood and attitude of the persona. The **persona** is the person who talks in the poem – namely, the blind boy himself.

**Practice**

**Activity 1**

Practise reading the poem aloud then answer the comprehension questions.

The Blind Boy by Colley Cibber

O say what is that thing call’d Light,

Which I must ne’er enjoy;

What are the blessings of the sight,

O tell your poor blind boy!

You talk of wondrous things you see,

You say the sun shines bright;

I feel him warm, but how can he

Or make it day or night?

My day or night myself I make

Whene’er I sleep or play;

And could I ever keep awake

With me ’twere always day.

With heavy sighs I often hear

You mourn my hapless woe;

But sure with patience I can bear

A loss I ne’er can know.

Then let not what I cannot have

My cheer of mind destroy:

Whilst thus I sing, I am a king,

Although a poor blind boy.

**Comprehension questions**

1. Who wrote the poem?
2. How does the blind boy divide time?
3. Who is the speaker in the poem?
4. According to the poet there are two blessing of sight that he does not enjoy. What are they?

**Activity 2**

Answer the following questions. Choose the correct answer from the multiple choice options provided.

1. The persona of the poem ‘The Blind Boy’ is
2. the poet himself
3. a blind boy
4. story teller
5. doctor
6. A thing not enjoyed by the blind boy is
7. gifts of sun
8. gifts of nature
9. gift of sight
10. day and night
11. The person addressed as ‘you’ in the poem the Blind Boy is
12. the poet
13. social worker
14. the eye specialist
15. the people with sight
16. A thing that is not seen by the Blind Boy but felt by him is
17. the earth
18. the sun
19. the moon
20. his body
21. The blind boy feels the sun by
22. touch
23. day
24. night
25. warmth
26. The riddle to the blind boy is
27. the secret of the day and night
28. the secret of sight
29. the secret of nature
30. the secret of the world
31. Who feels sorry for the blind boy
32. his sight
33. others with sight
34. joy of others
35. sight of the blind
36. The blind boy cheers his mind by a
37. nature
38. birds’ song
39. his song
40. voice

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**Activity 1**

1. It was written by Colley Cibber.
2. It is divided into day and night according to his activities and sleep.
3. The speaker is the blind boy.
4. The two blessings of sight that he does not enjoy are the sight of the bright sunlight and how the day changes to night.

**Activity 2**

1. b 2. c 3. d 4. b 5. d 6. a 7.b 8. c