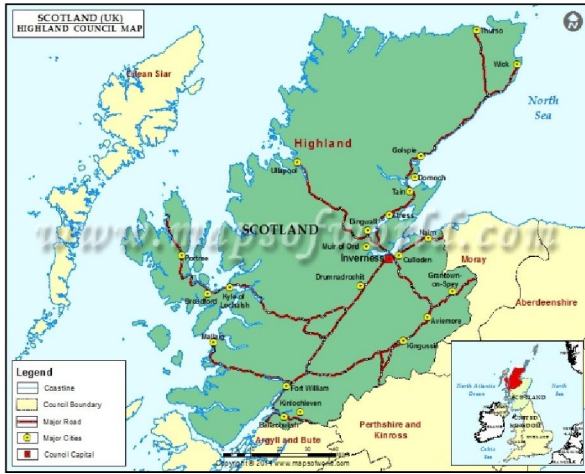


**SUBJECT: ENGLISH LITERATURE**  
**CLASS: VIII**  
**CHAPTER: (POEM) – THE SOLITARY REAPER**  
**BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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**THEME**

The major theme of the poem is the power of imagination and its connection with emotions and intuition.

**GENRE**

The poem is a lyrical ballad.

**SUMMARY**

The poem was inspired by Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy's stay at a village in Scotland. The poem begins with the apostrophe – where the speaker addresses the readers directly, asking them to stand and watch the lonely Scottish Highland girl who cuts and binds the grain with a sickle in her hand, without disturbing her. The poet is mesmerized as he listens to the reaper's song as she works in the field. In the second stanza the poet compares her song with that of a nightingale. The melodious note of a nightingale, according to him is not as effective as the girl's song which sounds sweeter and more welcoming to a tired group of travellers in some shady shelter in the middle of the Arabian desert. The comparison shifts to the cuckoo, a well known song bird. The cuckoo's song in spring breaks the silence of the seas in the far off Hebrides islands situated off the north-west coast of Scotland. He feels



## WORKSHEET

- Q1. Where was the Solitary Reaper working?
- Q2. What was the girl doing in the field?
- Q3. What does the poet compare the young girl's song with?
- Q4. What could the Solitary Reaper be singing about?
- Q5. How do we know that the Solitary Reaper's song had a profound effect on the poet?

## ANSWER KEY

**A1.** The Solitary Reaper was working in the field of the Scottish Highland.

**A2.** The young Highland girl was reaping in the field and singing as she stopped to cut the grains and bind into several bundles.

**A3.** The poet compares the young girl's song with the nightingale and the cuckoo bird whose songs enchant the listener, leaving him mesmerized.

**A4.** According to the poet, the song of the young Highland girl had a melancholic tune. Though the words of the song were inaudible, Wordsworth assumed that the content of the song could be a tale of unhappy times; of faroff things or of some battles which were fought years ago. He also thought that it could be of a humble matter of day to day happenings or the theme of the song could also be of some personal loss or pain.

**A5.** The young Highland girl's song which echoed in the beautiful serene ambience of Northern Scotland, made an everlasting impression on the poet so much so that he felt it echoing in his ears, lingering in his heart long after it could not be heard anymore. The song left him mesmerized and he was unable to move for a while.