The World Is Too Much With Us

William Wordsworth, 1770 - 1850

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.--Great God! I’d rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

1. Which of these is the main theme of the poem?
A. Linking man’s doom with his neglect of nature
B. Man’s insensitiveness to nature
C. Man is a burden on nature
D. Man is using nature for his own use
E. Man is unable to take care of nature
2. What is the mood of the poet in the poem “The World is too much with us” by William Wordsworth?
A. A sense of loss
B. A ridicule of man’s attitude towards nature
C. An expression of sadness
D. A feeling of dejection.
E. An angry outburst

3. To what does the poet refer in the phrase “getting and spending” (Line 2) of the poem
A. Man’s pre-occupation with earning and spending to live life comfortably
B. Using what nature gives and spending it
C. Wasting the wealth of nature
D. The neglect of nature
E. Not making use of nature

4. The exclamation “Great God” refers to the poet’s _______________
A. desire to be one with nature
B. prayer to God to change man’s attitude
C. Desire to be raised as a pagan
D. Desire to be blind to man’s indifference to nature
E. Desire for man to be one with nature

5. What type of poetry does the poem exemplify?
A. A lyric
B. A sonnet
C. Free Verse
D. Blank Verse
E. Ballad

6. Which of the following literary devices have been used in the poem?
I. synecdoche
II. Assonance
III. Metaphor
IV. Simile
V. Hyperbole
A. I and V
B. II, III and IV
C. III and V
D. I, III, and IV
E. All of them
Answer Key and Explanations:

1. **Answer: A**
   Explanation: The poet, William Wordsworth, links the probability of man’s eventual doom and degradation, if he moves away from nature and is concerned only about his own life and pleasures in life.

2. **Answer: E**
   Explanation: the poet is angry with man’s insensitive attitude towards nature and man’s satisfaction in living life away from nature. Some lines that gives us a sense of the poet’s mood are:
   - Line 4 - “We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”
   - Line 8 - For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
   - Line 9 - It moves us not.--Great God! I’d rather be

3. **Answer: A**
   Explanation: the poet is of the opinion that man is just concerned with getting or earning a livelihood and spending it on comforts of life and is not concerned about nature

4. **Answer: C**
   Explanation: When the poet sees the wind blowing and the flow of the seas, he wishes he was a Pagan, the God of Nature, so that he can see the gods at work

5. **Answer: B**
   Explanation: the poem is a sonnet; A sonnet is a short poem of 14 lines and is written in iambic pentameter. Usually a sonnet has two or three four lined verse and a final couplet which is of two line. The rhyme scheme of a sonnet is straight forward. In this poem the rhyme scheme is abba, abba, and ababab

6. **Answer: D**
   Explanation: the poem uses a number of literary devices like:
   - **Synecdoche:**
     Line 8 is an example of Synecdoche. By the expression “for this, for everything” the poet refers to the sea and he wind and makes the two elements a symbol for the whole world. A synecdoche is when a part is expressed to mean a whole.
   - **Metaphor:** There are many examples of metaphors in the poem.
     Line 6 - The sound of the wind is compared to an animal’s howl.
     Line 8 – Man (we) is referred to as a musical instrument that is out of tune.
   - **Simile:**
     Line 7 - The winds are at rest and the poet compares it to the “sleeping flowers”