

Collegedunia NCERT Notes

NCERT Revision Notes

Chapter 18: Ode to a Nightingale

Ode to a Nightingale class 11 notes revise Keats's poem, song, suffering, immortal bird and answer frames.

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#) [NCERT Book PDF](#) [Handwritten Notes](#)

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1 Chapter Snapshot

John Keats's ode begins in pain and rises into the imagined freedom of the nightingale's song. The poem then returns to loneliness, doubt and the famous closing question.

1.1 Chapter Snapshot: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Poet	John Keats, a major English Romantic poet.	Use in the introduction.
Core contrast	Mortal human suffering against the bird's seemingly timeless song.	Main theme.
Movement	Pain, ecstasy, escape, memory, return and doubt.	Summary answer.
Bird	A natural singer linked with beauty and continuity.	Symbol answer.
Ending	The speaker asks if he wakes or sleeps.	Final mood.

Revision cue

Chapter Snapshot is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

Poet

Core contrast

Movement

Bird

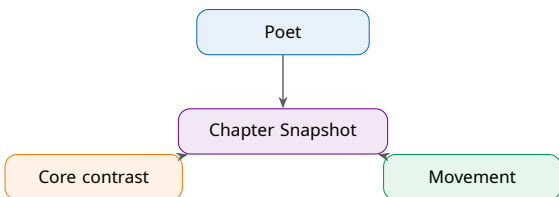
Ending

1.2 Chapter Snapshot: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



1.3 Chapter Snapshot: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Poet	Use in the introduction.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Core contrast	Main theme.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Movement	Summary answer.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Bird	Symbol answer.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Ending	Final mood.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

2 Opening Mood and Ecstasy

The poem starts in heartache and numbness. The speaker is not jealous of the bird. He becomes too happy in its happiness.

2.1 Opening Mood and Ecstasy: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Heartache	The speaker begins with pain and numbness.	Opening mood.
Hemlock	A poison image linked with dullness.	Sensory image.
Lethe	A river of forgetfulness in Greek myth.	Myth cue.
Happy lot	The bird's state seems joyful and free.	Ecstasy.
Full-throated ease	The song sounds effortless.	Answer evidence.

Revision cue

Opening Mood and Ecstasy is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

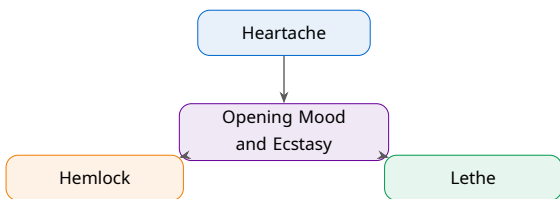


2.2 Opening Mood and Ecstasy: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



2.3 Opening Mood and Ecstasy: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Heartache	Opening mood.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Hemlock	Sensory image.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Lethe	Myth cue.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Happy lot	Ecstasy.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Full-throated ease	Answer evidence.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

3 Wine, Imagination and Escape

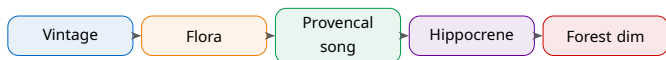
The speaker imagines wine as a passage out of the visible world. Wine becomes a route toward song, colour and poetic excitement.

3.1 Wine, Imagination and Escape: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Vintage	Old wine from deep earth.	Escape image.
Flora	Flowers and country freshness.	Nature cue.
Provençal song	Music, dance and southern warmth.	Cultural image.
Hippocrene	A fountain linked with poetic inspiration.	Poetry cue.
Forest dim	The place where he wants to fade with the bird.	Escape.

Revision cue

Wine, Imagination and Escape is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

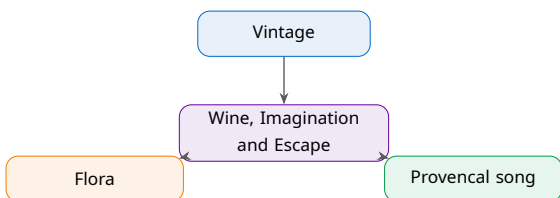


3.2 Wine, Imagination and Escape: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



3.3 Wine, Imagination and Escape: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Vintage	Escape image.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Flora	Nature cue.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Provençal song	Cultural image.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Hippocrene	Poetry cue.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Forest dim	Escape.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird,

song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

4 Human Condition

The third movement lists the unpleasant aspects of human life. Keats gathers illness, ageing, sorrow, fading beauty and short-lived love in one painful catalogue.

4.1 Human Condition: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Weariness	Tiredness of human existence.	NCERT Q2.
Fever and fret	Restless pain and worry.	Human condition.
Palsy	Physical decay in old age.	Ageing.
Youth grows pale	Even youth is not safe from death.	Mortality.
Leadene-eyed despairs	Heavy sorrow caused by thought.	Despair.

Revision cue

Human Condition is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

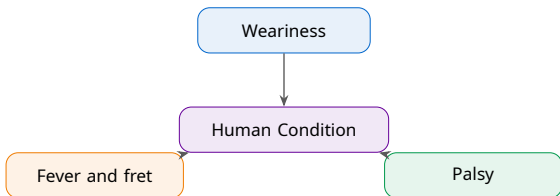


4.2 Human Condition: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



4.3 Human Condition: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Weariness	NCERT Q2.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Fever and fret	Human condition.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Palsy	Ageing.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Youth grows pale	Mortality.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Leaden-eyed despairs	Despair.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

5 Beauty and Love

The poem highlights beauty and love as intense but temporary. They shine strongly, yet they cannot remain untouched by time.

5.1 Beauty and Love: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Beauty	Cannot keep its lustrous eyes.	NCERT Q3.
New Love	Cannot pine beyond tomorrow.	NCERT Q3.
Time	Weakens both beauty and feeling.	Theme.
Fragility	Human pleasure is unstable.	Answer word.
Contrast	The bird's song seems more durable.	Comparison.

Revision cue

Beauty and Love is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

Beauty

New Love

Time

Fragility

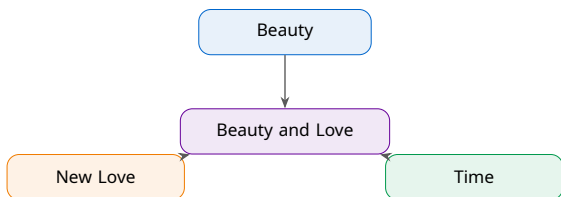
Contrast

5.2 Beauty and Love: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



5.3 Beauty and Love: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Beauty	NCERT Q3.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
New Love	NCERT Q3.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Time	Theme.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Fragility	Answer word.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Contrast	Comparison.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

6 Immortal Bird

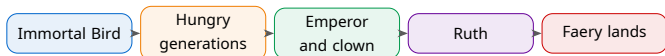
Keats calls the bird immortal because the song seems to cross generations. The individual bird may die, but the song type appears timeless.

6.1 Immortal Bird: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Immortal Bird	Symbolic immortality, not literal biology.	NCERT Q4.
Hungry generations	Human generations cannot tread the song down.	Evidence.
Emperor and clown	The song reaches high and low people.	History.
Ruth	A homesick biblical figure.	Allusion.
Faery lands	Romance and imagination widen the song.	Poetic range.

Revision cue

Immortal Bird is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

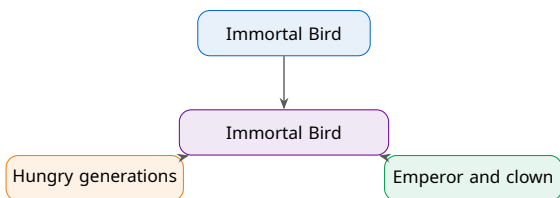


6.2 Immortal Bird: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



6.3 Immortal Bird: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Immortal Bird	NCERT Q4.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Hungry generations	Evidence.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Emperor and clown	History.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Ruth	Allusion.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Faery lands	Poetic range.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

7 Forlorn and Return

The word forlorn breaks the imaginative spell. It sounds like a bell and tolls the speaker back to his own lonely self.

7.1 Forlorn and Return: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Forlorn	Lonely and abandoned.	Turning point.
Bell	Sound image that recalls reality.	NCERT Q5.
Sole self	The speaker returns to isolation.	Mood.
Fancy	Imagination cannot cheat reality for long.	Theme.
Fading anthem	The bird's song moves away.	Ending.

Revision cue

Forlorn and Return is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

Forlorn

Bell

Sole self

Fancy

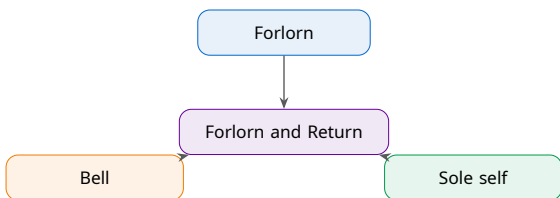
Fading
anthem

7.2 Forlorn and Return: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



7.3 Forlorn and Return: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Forlorn	Turning point.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Bell	NCERT Q5.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Sole self	Mood.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Fancy	Theme.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Fading anthem	Ending.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

8 Elusive Happiness

The poem presents happiness as brief. Song and imagination lift the mind for a while, but mortal awareness returns.

8.1 Elusive Happiness: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Ecstasy	A short state of lifted joy.	NCERT Q1 and Q6.
Escape	Wine, poetry and song promise release.	Method.
Reality	Human suffering remains unchanged.	Limit.
Doubt	The ending does not settle the experience.	Close.
Elusive	Happiness is hard to hold.	Keyword meaning.

Revision cue

Elusive Happiness is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

Ecstasy

Escape

Reality

Doubt

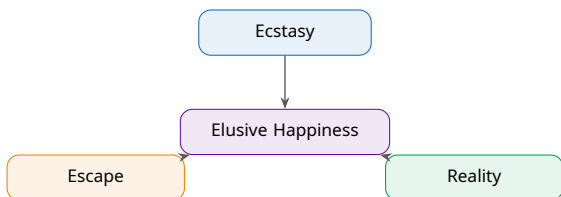
Elusive

8.2 Elusive Happiness: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



8.3 Elusive Happiness: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Ecstasy	NCERT Q1 and Q6.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Escape	Method.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Reality	Limit.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Doubt	Close.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Elusive	Keyword meaning.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

9 Poetic Devices

The ode uses apostrophe, contrast, oxymoron-like pairings, sensuous imagery and allusion. These devices make the emotional movement vivid.

9.1 Poetic Devices: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Apostrophe	The poet addresses the bird directly.	Try This Out.
Contrast	Pain and joy, waking and dream.	Effect.
Allusion	Lethe, Hippocrene and Ruth.	Reference.
Sound	Song, anthem, bell and fading music.	Senses.
Taste	Wine, beaker and bubbles.	Sensuous image.

Revision cue

Poetic Devices is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

Apostrophe

Contrast

Allusion

Sound

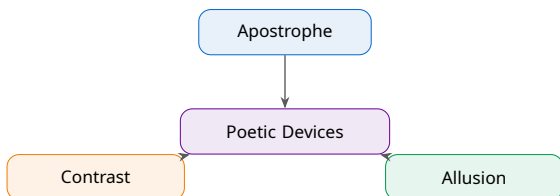
Taste

9.2 Poetic Devices: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



9.3 Poetic Devices: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Apostrophe	Try This Out.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Contrast	Effect.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Allusion	Reference.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Sound	Senses.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Taste	Sensuous image.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

10 NCERT Answer Frames

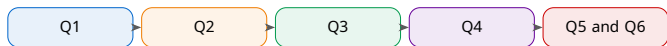
Strong answers move from image to idea. Quote short phrases, then explain ecstasy, mortality, beauty or doubt.

10.1 NCERT Answer Frames: Key Points

Focus	Meaning	Exam use
Q1	Song creates ecstasy by lifting the speaker from pain.	Opening answer.
Q2	List weariness, illness, ageing, death and despair.	Human condition.
Q3	Beauty and love are transient.	Theme.
Q4	The song crosses time, history and legend.	Immortality.
Q5 and Q6	Forlorn returns him to reality and happiness slips away.	Final movement.

Revision cue

NCERT Answer Frames is best revised through image, mood and exact NCERT phrase links.

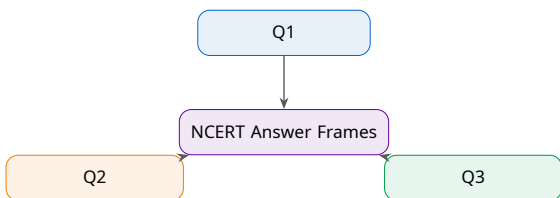


10.2 NCERT Answer Frames: Explanation

Read the section as a movement, not as isolated facts. Keats lets one image change into another so that the speaker's mind appears restless and searching.

Answer method

State the image first, then show the emotional or philosophical effect. This keeps the answer close to the poem.



10.3 NCERT Answer Frames: Exam Frame

Cue	Where to use	How to use
Q1	Opening answer.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Q2	Human condition.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Q3	Theme.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Q4	Immortality.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.
Q5 and Q6	Final movement.	Use this as a short quote cue or answer cue.

Common check

Do not write a broad Romantic-poetry answer without the poem's own images. Use the bird, song, wine, human pain and final doubt.

11 Quick Reference Summary

Use this last page before a class test. It gathers the poem's main answer cues in one place.

11.1 Six NCERT Prompts

Prompt	Best answer line	NCERT use
Ecstasy	The song lifts the speaker from numbness into shared joy.	Q1
Human condition	Life has weariness, illness, age, death and despair.	Q2
Beauty and love	Both are intense but temporary.	Q3
Immortal bird	The song appears to cross time and generations.	Q4
Forlorn	The word breaks imagination and returns him to himself.	Q5
Happiness	Joy arrives briefly and slips into doubt.	Q6

11.2 One-minute Recap

- The poem begins in pain and numbness.
- The bird's song creates a temporary ecstatic

escape.

- Human life is shown as full of decay and sorrow.
- Beauty, love and happiness cannot be held permanently.
- The bird's song seems timeless, but the speaker's joy fades.

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