



Collegedunia NCERT Notes

Class 12 English Notes Chapter 9 Flamingo Poetry: A Thing of Beauty

Chapter 9 – Flamingo Poetry: A Thing of Beauty

by John Keats (opening of *Endymion*, Book I)

CBSE Class 12th English Core, Flamingo Reader, Poetry Section

Aligned to CBSE syllabus 2026-27

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#)

This revision guide unpacks John Keats's celebrated opening passage of Endymion, Book I, anthologised in Flamingo as A Thing of Beauty, for Class 12th readers. Inside: the full extract, a line-by-line explication, the central themes, the dominant literary devices, a complete inventory of poetic imagery, the key quotations parsed for board examiners, a compact biography of John Keats, the CBSE exam-pattern question types you should expect, and a quick-revision summary you can read the night before the paper.

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1 Introduction to the Poem and Its Poet

A Thing of Beauty is the title given by the NCERT *Flamingo* textbook to the opening passage of John Keats's long narrative poem *Endymion*, Book I, first published in 1818. The passage is twenty-four lines long, written in rhymed iambic pentameter heroic couplets, and is one of the most quoted openings in all of English Romantic poetry. The very first line, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever", has become an English proverb. The extract argues that beautiful things in the natural world and in human culture have the lasting power to lift us out of suffering and to bind us, like a flowery wreath, to the earth we live on.

1.1 Why Class 12 Students Read This Poem

The CBSE Class 12 English (Core) syllabus uses the Poetry section of *Flamingo* to introduce students to canonical voices from different periods and continents. John Keats is the Romantic representative, placed here because the passage is compact enough to teach in two periods, accessible at the surface (the famous opening line is already familiar), and yet opens into the deep Romantic themes that the board paper rewards: beauty as a moral force, nature as solace, the role of imagination, and the dignity of the "mighty dead". The extract feeds Reading-comprehension extract questions, Short Answer questions on imagery and form, and Long Answer thematic questions on beauty and suffering.

Why This Poem Matters in Class 12

- It is the only **Romantic-era poem** in the Class 12 *Flamingo* selection, so all questions on the Romantic movement anchor here.
- It is written in **rhymed heroic couplets in iambic pentameter**, so it is the natural test-piece for questions on poetic form, rhyme scheme and metre.
- It carries a **thesis-and-evidence structure**: an opening claim, a cata-

logue of beautiful things, a catalogue of suffering, and a closing image. The board often quotes one of the four parts and asks for the function of that part.

- Three big themes ride together inside the extract: *beauty as a lasting joy*, *nature plus culture as a shared wreath*, and *the redemptive function of art*.

1.2 Quick Facts You Should Know

Lock in these facts; the board often opens an extract-based question with one of them.

Poet John Keats (1795-1821)	Poem A Thing of Beauty	Form Heroic couplets, iambic pentameter
Source Opening of <i>Endymion</i> , Book I (1818)	Central thesis Beauty is a joy for ever	Tone Affirmative, hopeful, reverent

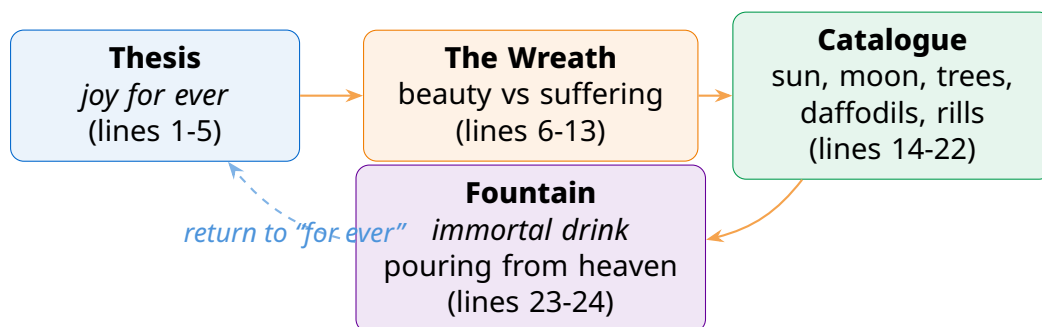
Board-Paper Hook

If an extract-based question opens with *A thing of beauty is a joy for ever*, identify (a) the poet, (b) the title, (c) the parent work (*Endymion*, Book I), (d) the form (heroic couplets, iambic pentameter), and (e) the source textbook (*Flamingo*). Most 1-mark openings test exactly these five facts.

1.3 The Extract at a Glance

The twenty-four-line passage is structured as a single sustained argument. The opening couplet states the thesis. The middle stanza develops it with a catalogue of beautiful things, both natural and cultural. A brief countersection lists the kinds of suffering that beauty must work against. The closing image, the “endless fountain of immortal drink”, seals the argument by figuring beauty as a divine, perpetual gift.

The shape of the passage looks like this when drawn out: a thesis on the left, the wreath in the middle that absorbs both beautiful things and named sufferings, and a closing fountain image that returns the joy to the reader as a continuous pour.



A Proverb in Everyday English

The opening line of this extract is one of the most quoted in the English language. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" has travelled out of Keats's poem into ordinary speech, into newspaper headlines, into the captions under photographs of sunsets, into the inscriptions on greeting cards. A board paper that asks why this line is famous expects you to notice the two-word "for ever" and to explain that Keats turns the temporary pleasure of beauty into a permanent one, the move at the heart of all Romantic poetics.

2 The Poem Text and Layout

This section reproduces the extract in the line-sequence used in the NCERT *Flamingo* reader so that you can lift quotations directly into board-paper answers without losing the original cadence. The passage is reproduced for educational purposes; the work is by John Keats and was first published in 1818.

2.1 Full Text of the Extract

Poem: A Thing of Beauty (Endymion I.1-24), by John Keats

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.

Such the sun, the moon,

Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

2.2 How the Text Is Laid Out on the Page

Notice five textual choices that the board paper loves to ask about.

- **Heroic couplets in iambic pentameter.** The whole passage is in rhymed pairs (AA BB CC...) of ten-syllable lines, the most prestigious metrical form in English poetry. Knowing this pays off in any question on form.
- **Enjambment across most couplets.** Although the lines rhyme in pairs, the sense runs over the line-break almost every time. This gives the passage its conversational, river-like motion.
- **A long catalogue in the middle.** Lines 14–23 are a single sentence listing seven items of beauty. The catalogue is deliberately mixed, moving from celestial (sun, moon) to terrestrial (trees, sheep) to vegetal (daffodils, musk-roses) to cultural (the mighty dead, lovely tales).
- **Two contrasting catalogues.** The catalogue of beauty is preceded by a brief catalogue of suffering (lines 8–11). The poem's logic is the balance between the two.
- **A single closing image.** The passage ends with the "endless fountain of immortal drink". Read this as the architectural match to the opening thesis line; it is the image that proves the claim.

Do Not Misquote the Famous Line

The correct opening is *A thing of beauty is a joy for ever* (note the spelling "for ever" as two words in Keats's text). Some students write "a joy forever" or "a joy in itself". The board paper marks the two-word "for ever" form as the canonical phrasing.

Extract, Not Whole Poem

The lines you read in *Flamingo* are the *opening* of Keats's long narrative poem *Endymion*, which runs to four Books and several thousand lines. The *Flamingo* selection is twenty-four lines, treated as a stand-alone meditation. When you

write about the poem in the board paper, refer to it as “the extract from *Endymion*, Book I” for accuracy.

3 Line-by-Line Summary and Explication

The extract moves through four distinguishable units of thought. This section walks each unit, explaining what is literally being said, what the speaker is doing rhetorically, and which line-level details carry the meaning.

3.1 Unit 1: The Thesis (lines 1-5)

Lines: *A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: / Its loveliness increases; it will never / Pass into nothingness; but still will keep / A bower quiet for us, and a sleep / Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.*

The poem opens with a declarative thesis: a beautiful thing is not a passing pleasure but a permanent joy. Keats then specifies four gifts the joy delivers, (i) loveliness that *increases* with time, (ii) immunity from disappearance (“never / Pass into nothingness”), (iii) a quiet shelter (“bower”) the soul can retreat to, and (iv) sleep “full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing”. The four gifts move from mind to body, ending in the most physical of all: the steady breath of a healthy sleeper.

Unit 1 Explication: The Thesis

What is happening: Beauty is named as a permanent joy, not a momentary one.

Why “increases”: The loveliness of a beautiful thing *grows* with each return to it; it does not fade.

Why “bower” and “sleep”: The thesis is grounded in felt-life. Beauty is not abstract; it shelters and rests the body.

3.2 Unit 2: Beauty Versus Suffering (lines 6-13)

Lines: *Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing / A flowery band to bind us to the earth, / Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth / Of noble natures, of the gloomy days, / Of all the unhealthy and o’er-darkened ways / Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all, / Some shape of beauty moves away the pall / From our dark spirits.*

The second unit answers the question: why does the joy matter? Because life carries suffering, and beauty is what counter-balances it. The verb “wreathing” (line 6) gives the central image of the extract: every day (“on every morrow”) we weave a wreath of beautiful things to bind us to the earth. Four kinds of suffering are named, despondence (inner gloom), inhuman dearth of noble natures (social shortage of generous people), gloomy days (atmospheric heaviness), and the un-

healthy darkened ways we sometimes choose. Against all four, “some shape of beauty moves away the pall / From our dark spirits”. A pall is the dark cloth laid over a coffin; beauty lifts that cloth.

The Wreath Image

“Wreathing / A flowery band to bind us to the earth” is the extract’s defining metaphor. Each beautiful thing is one flower in the wreath. The band “binds” us, but the binding is positive, like the string that anchors a kite. Without the wreath, the spirit might drift away from life altogether.

3.3 Unit 3: The Catalogue of Beauty (lines 14-23)

Lines: *Such the sun, the moon, / Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon / For simple sheep; and such are daffodils / With the green world they live in; and clear rills / That for themselves a cooling covert make / 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake, / Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms: / And such too is the grandeur of the dooms / We have imagined for the mighty dead; / All lovely tales that we have heard or read.*

The third unit is the catalogue itself, the wreath unpacked. Reading the list in order:

- **The sun and the moon.** Two great cyclical lights: they renew themselves and so embody “for ever”.
- **Old and young trees that give shade.** Trees of every age, useful as well as beautiful (“a shady boon / For simple sheep”).
- **Daffodils with the green world they live in.** Flowers *with their setting*, Keats refuses to praise the bloom in isolation.
- **Clear streams making cool coverts.** Small streams that build their own shelter against the heat of summer.
- **The mid-forest brake with musk-rose blooms.** A wild thicket in the heart of the forest, sprinkled with sweet wild roses.
- **The grandeur imagined for the mighty dead.** Beauty is not only natural; it includes the noble destinies (“dooms”) we picture for the great figures of the past.
- **All lovely tales heard or read.** The catalogue closes with literature itself, legend, story, myth.

Two Halves of the Catalogue

The first five items are **natural** (celestial, vegetable, liquid); the last two are **cultural** (the dead, the tales we tell). A complete board answer always names both halves of the catalogue.

3.4 Unit 4: The Closing Image (lines 23-24)

Lines: *An endless fountain of immortal drink, / Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.*

The final two lines seal the argument. The earth's beauty is compared to a heavenly fountain whose water never runs out, whose source is divine, and whose pouring is continuous. The image bookends the opening line: the "joy for ever" of line 1 returns as the "endless fountain" of line 23, but now visualised as an ongoing pour from the edge of heaven. The verb "pouring" is a present participle, like "wreathing" earlier: beauty is not a static gift, it is a continuous act.

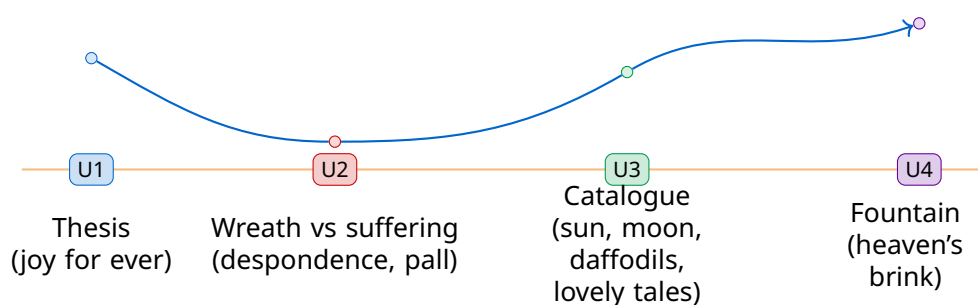
Why the Fountain Image Works

A fountain is upward-and-downward; despondence (named in line 8) is downward only. By closing with a fountain, Keats answers the heaviness of despondence with an image that lifts. The water "pour[s] from the heaven's brink", so the earth receives more than its share, exactly Keats's view of the gift of beauty.

3.5 The Argumentative Arc in One Picture

If the four units are arranged on a single line, the shape of the poem's argument becomes visible. The poem opens with a high abstract claim, descends through a list of named human sufferings, rises again through a long catalogue of natural and cultural beauty, and closes on a heavenward image. The arc is a gentle V that ends higher than it began.

Argument rises after the dip through suffering



Read the Catalogue Outwards

When you walk through the catalogue (sun, moon, trees, daffodils, rills, musk-roses, the mighty dead, lovely tales), the items move **outward in distance from the body**: first the great sky lights, then ground-level vegetation, then water, then forest thickets, then dead heroes, then stories. A useful three-mark answer points out that Keats orders his catalogue from the cosmic to the cultural in one breath.

4 Themes of the Extract

The extract is short, but four major themes braid through it. A strong board answer can pick any one and ground it in the lines above.

4.1 Theme 1: Beauty as a Lasting Joy

The thesis is the famous opening line: “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever”. Keats does not say beauty is *intense*; he says it is *lasting*. The loveliness “increases” with each return; it will never “pass into nothingness”. The board paper rewards candidates who notice that Keats’s claim is about *duration*, not magnitude.

4.2 Theme 2: Nature and Culture, One Wreath

The catalogue mixes natural and cultural items in a single sentence. The sun and the moon sit beside “all lovely tales that we have heard or read”. The unity of nature and culture is the extract’s quiet structural argument: beauty has no preferred domain. A board candidate who lists only flowers and sheep misses half the poem.

4.3 Theme 3: Suffering as the Counterweight

The middle of the extract names four kinds of suffering, despondence, inhuman dearth of noble natures, gloomy days, darkened ways. The poem’s logic is the balance between these and the catalogue of beauty. Beauty is not a luxury alongside suffering; it is the deliberate counterweight.

4.4 Theme 4: The Redemptive Function of Art

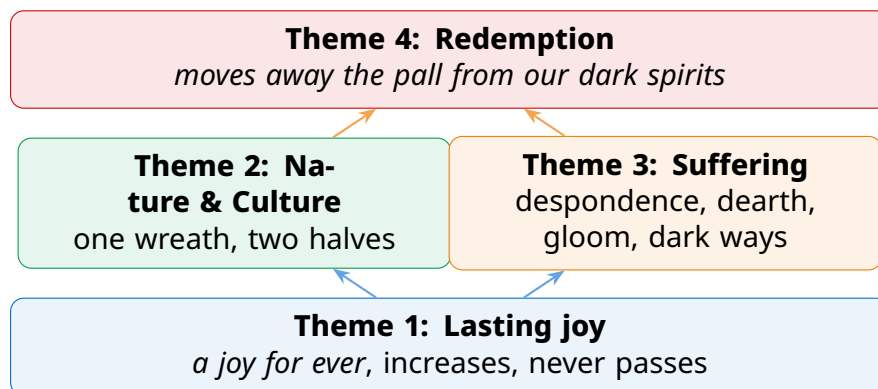
The phrase “moves away the pall / From our dark spirits” is Keats’s claim for what beauty (and, by extension, art) actually *does*. It lifts the pall, a death-cloth, from the spirit. Art is therefore not decoration; it is a kind of resurrection. The closing fountain image, “pouring unto us from the heaven’s brink”, extends this to a near-religious vocabulary.

All Four Themes Sit in One Sentence

The single sentence beginning “Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing / A flowery band...” (lines 6–13) contains all four themes: the wreath (beauty), the binding (lasting joy), the four sufferings, and the verb “moves away the pall” (redemption). If you can explicate this sentence, you have explicated the poem.

4.5 Theme Map: How the Four Themes Connect

The four themes are not parallel; they sit in a definite logical relation. Lasting joy is the foundation; nature and culture are two pillars that rest on it; suffering is the counter-pressure that the pillars resist; redemption (the pall-lifting beauty) is what the structure delivers at the top.



Do Not Read the Catalogue as a List of Favourites

Some students paraphrase the catalogue as “Keats lists his favourite beautiful things”. The catalogue is not personal taste, it is evidence for the thesis. Each item proves that beauty *exists* in many forms (cosmic, vegetal, liquid, cultural), and so the thesis (“a joy for ever”) can be defended. Treat the list as argument, not as preference.

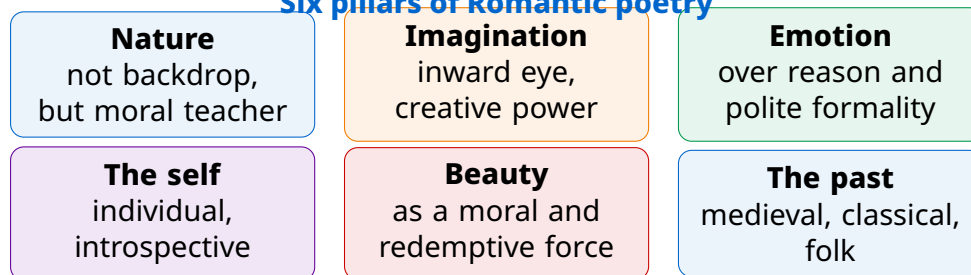
5 The Romantic Context and the Endymion Frame

A board paper question on *A Thing of Beauty* sometimes asks why the poem is called Romantic, or what *Endymion* is, or how the extract fits into Keats’s larger career. This section answers all three together so that you can drop the right fact into a 1-mark biographical question or a 6-mark thematic essay.

5.1 The Romantic Movement in One Page

The Romantic movement in English poetry runs roughly from 1789 to 1830, framed at one end by the French Revolution and at the other by the death of Sir Walter Scott. Its central conviction is that imagination, feeling, and the natural world give us a truer account of reality than the rational, urban and industrial habits of the Enlightenment that came before it. Romantic poets praise solitude, childhood, common speech, dreams, the supernatural and, above all, the binding of human life to nature.

Six pillars of Romantic poetry



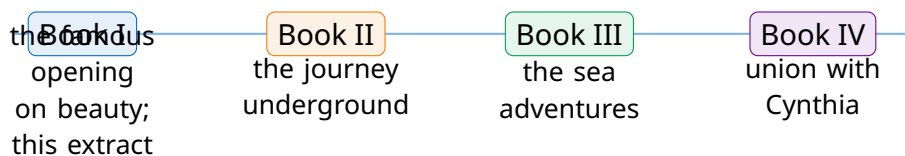
The Romantic generation falls neatly into two waves. The first generation (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake) wrote in the 1790s and 1800s; the second generation (Byron, Shelley, Keats) wrote in the 1810s and 1820s. Keats is the youngest, the most ill-fated, and, in his concern for beauty as a moral force, the most concentrated of the six.

Why “Romantic” Does Not Mean “Love-Sick”

In common English, “romantic” has come to mean “concerned with love”. In literary studies, the word refers to the early- nineteenth-century movement described above; it has almost nothing to do with romance in the love-affair sense. A board paper that asks you to comment on the poem as “Romantic” is asking about the literary movement, not about Keats’s love life. Treat the word as a period label.

5.2 What is Endymion?

Endymion is a long narrative poem in four Books, published in 1818, that Keats wrote at the age of twenty-two. Its subject is the Greek myth of Endymion, a beautiful young shepherd whom the moon-goddess Selene (Cynthia in the poem) falls in love with and keeps in a perpetual sleep so that she may visit him each night. The poem follows Endymion’s wanderings, his pursuit of an ideal, and his eventual union with the goddess. The opening twenty-four lines, the Flamingo extract, are a sustained meditation on the beauty of the world that exists outside the dream, the very same world the lovers will eventually rejoin.

The four Books of *Endymion*, 1818Why the Opening of *Endymion* Stands Alone

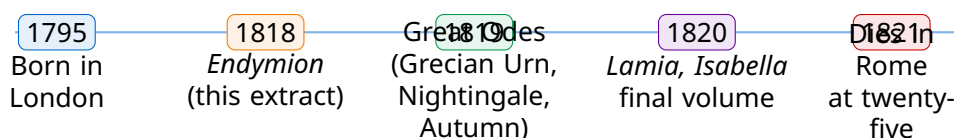
The opening twenty-four lines were written almost as a prologue, a hymn to the beauty that surrounds the human world before the poem narrows to its mythical story. That is why CBSE could anthologise these lines as a stand-alone poem: they were *designed* to be a complete meditation, even before

the long narrative begins.

5.3 Keats's Career in One Diagram

Keats lived for only twenty-five years, but the curve of his poetic production is unusually steep: a quiet apprenticeship, a single white-hot year of major work in 1819, and an early death in Rome in 1821. *A Thing of Beauty* sits at the start of that curve, the first major statement of the conviction he would push to its limit in the great odes a year later.

John Keats: a brief timeline



KEEP: Four Keats Facts to Memorise

Keats lived twenty-five years (1795-1821).

Endymion 1818 contains the Flamingo extract.

Eighteen-nineteen is the year of his great odes.

Passed away in Rome, far from England.

KEEP these four facts and any 1-mark Keats question is yours.

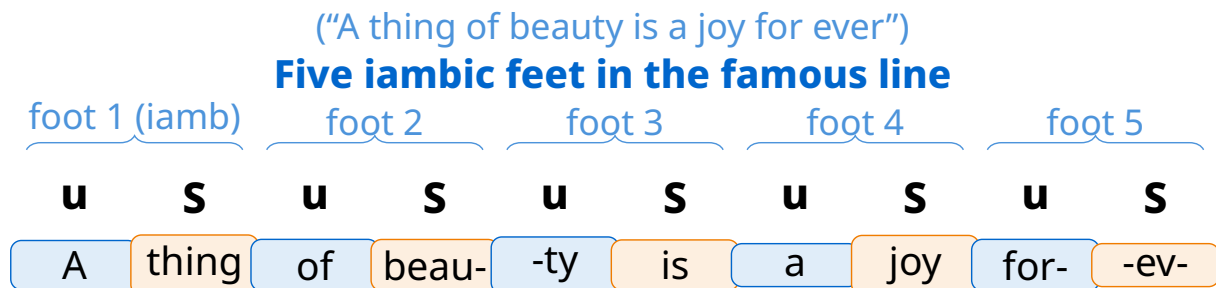
6 Literary Devices in the Extract

This section names the devices the CBSE paper most often asks about, with one or two examples each.

6.1 Heroic Couplets and Iambic Pentameter

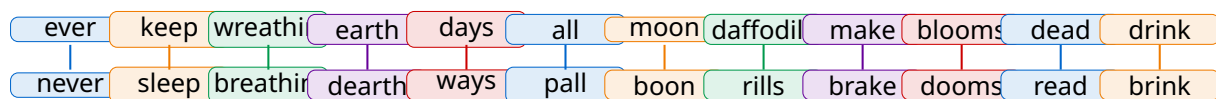
The whole extract is in rhymed heroic couplets in iambic pentameter (AA BB CC...). Five iambic feet per line, ten syllables, end-rhymed pairs. A board answer to "identify the form" should name all three elements, couplet, iambic, pentameter.

To see what an iambic-pentameter line looks like, scan the famous opening. An iamb is an unstressed-then-stressed pair of syllables; pentameter means five such pairs in one line; ten syllables in total. The convention is to mark the unstressed syllable **u** and the stressed syllable **S**.



The rhyme scheme of the passage is paired: each couplet locks together at the line endings. Most pairs are exact (*ever / never, keep / sleep, wreathing / breathing*); a few are near-rhymes that drift slightly. Seen as a diagram, the rhyme chain runs as below.

Couplet rhyme chain: AA BB CC DD EE FF GG HH II JJ KK LL



6.2 Metaphor

- "A thing of beauty is *a joy for ever*" (line 1): beauty as a perpetual joy.
- "We are *wreathing* a flowery band to bind us to the earth" (lines 6–7): beauty as a wreath.
- "*An endless fountain of immortal drink*" (line 23): beauty as a heavenly fountain.

6.3 Personification

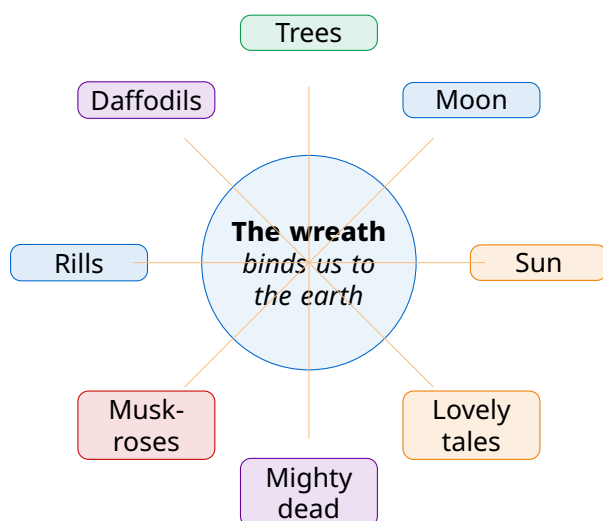
- "Its loveliness *increases*" (line 2): the beauty itself "increases".
- "Some shape of beauty *moves away the pall*" (line 12): the shape of beauty actively lifts the death-cloth.
- "Clear rills / That *for themselves* a cooling covert make" (lines 17–18): the streams are agents.

6.4 Imagery

The catalogue is the imagery: sun, moon, trees, sheep, daffodils, streams, musk-roses, the mighty dead, lovely tales, the fountain. Each is a self-contained image-cell.

When the catalogue is laid out as a wreath, it becomes clearer that Keats is binding distant kinds of beauty (celestial, vegetal, liquid, cultural) into a single flowered band. The wreath, in turn, is bound to the earth, holding the human spirit in place against the four named sufferings.

The wreath: eight images in one band



Why the Wreath Image Has Endured

The wreath is one of the oldest symbols in European poetry: laurel wreaths crowned ancient poets and athletes, funeral wreaths laid at gravesides, wedding wreaths braided into a bride's hair. Keats inherits that whole tradition and quietly secularises it. The wreath in this extract is a daily, ordinary act: "on every morrow, are we wreathing". A board answer that points out the weight of cultural inheritance carried by this word wins extra credit on a 5-mark literary-devices question.

6.5 Alliteration

- "Spreading the gloomy days", and the s-and-sh sounds across "some shape..." and "shady boon".
- "flowery flower..." inside the wreath passage.

6.6 Enjambment

The whole passage is built on running-over lines. Notice how the opening sentence ("A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: / Its loveliness increases; it will never / Pass into nothingness") spills across three lines before reaching a full stop. Enjambment gives the extract its conversational, almost spoken pace.

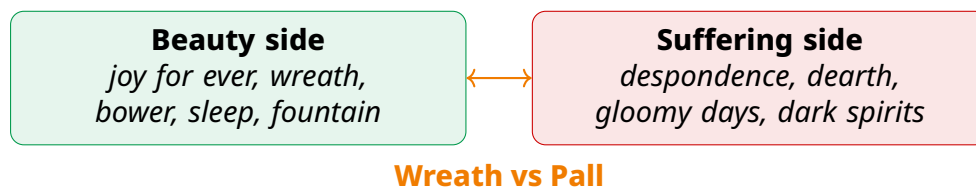
6.7 Repetition and Anaphora

The word *such* repeats three times in the catalogue ("*Such* the sun...and *such* are daffodils...and *such* too is the grandeur"). This is mild anaphora: each new item is added to the wreath with the same connective.

6.8 Antithesis

The whole extract is built on the antithesis between beauty and suffering, the wreath and the pall, the fountain and the gloom. Keats does not soften the contrast; he sets them side by side.

Read as a two-column table, the extract's antitheses line up neatly: each item on the left has a quiet, named counterpart on the right.



Pairings: joy ↔ despondence; loveliness increases ↔ inhuman dearth of noble natures; quiet bower ↔ gloomy days; sweet dreams ↔ unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways; shape of beauty ↔ pall on the spirit.

Do Not Soften the Suffering Side

A common slip is to mention only despondence and skip the other three sufferings. The poem names four (*despondence, the inhuman dearth of noble natures, gloomy days, the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways*). A 6-mark answer that lists all four wins a mark for completeness; one that lists only despondence does not.

7 Key Quotations and What the Board Wants From Them

7.1 Quotation 1: The Opening

Quotation 1

*"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness..."*

Board angle: thesis. Cite this for any question on the central idea or on why Keats considers beauty important. The two-word "for ever" and the present-tense "increases" are the marks-bearing details.

7.2 Quotation 2: The Wreath

Quotation 2

*"Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth..."*

Board angle: central metaphor. Cite this for any question on what beauty does for us. Notice the present-participle *wreathing*, the act is ongoing.

7.3 Quotation 3: The Pall

Quotation 3

*"...in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits."*

Board angle: redemption. Cite this for any question on how beauty works against suffering. "Pall" is a coffin-cloth, so the image is one of life lifting the cover of death.

7.4 Quotation 4: The Catalogue Opening

Quotation 4

*"Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep..."*

Board angle: the catalogue. Cite this when asked to list things of beauty. Remember to extend through the cultural items ("the grandeur of the dooms / We have imagined for the mighty dead") so the answer covers both halves of the list.

7.5 Quotation 5: The Closing Image

Quotation 5

*"An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."*

Board angle: closing image; image for the beautiful bounty of the earth. Cite this for the seventh "Think it out" question or for any thematic question on the divinity of beauty.

8 John Keats: A Compact Biography

John Keats was born in London in 1795 and died in Rome in 1821, aged only twenty-five. His short life produced some of the most enduring poetry in the English language. He trained briefly as a surgeon's apprentice before turning to poetry full-time. His major works include the long narrative poem *Endymion* (1818, the opening of which is the Flamingo extract), the great odes of 1819 ("Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to a Nightingale", "To Autumn"), and the romance *The Eve of St Agnes*.

Keats and the Romantic Movement

Keats is one of the second-generation English Romantic poets, alongside Shelley and Byron. The Romantic movement (roughly 1780s-1830s) emphasised **nature, emotion, individual imagination, and the redemptive power of art**. *A Thing of Beauty* expresses all four convictions in its opening twenty-four lines.

Three Keats Facts the Board Loves

(1) Born 1795, died 1821. **(2)** *Endymion* is the source of the extract, published 1818. **(3)** Famous for "negative capability" and the great odes of 1819.

9 Exam Pattern and What CBSE Asks From This Chapter

The CBSE Class 12 English (Core) board paper draws three kinds of questions from poetry chapters: (i) extract-based reading comprehension, (ii) Short Answer (3 marks), and (iii) Long Answer (6 marks). All three appear regularly for this extract.

9.1 Extract-Based Reading Comprehension

A six-to-eight-line passage is quoted from the poem and four or five questions are asked: poet's name, figure of speech, meaning of a phrase, theme, and a one-line interpretive question. Likely extracts include the opening five lines, the wreath sentence (lines 6-13), the catalogue opening, and the closing fountain image.

9.2 Short Answer Type (3 marks)

Recent or recurring 3-mark questions on the chapter include:

- "What does Keats consider an unending source of joy?"
- "What things cause us suffering in the poem?"
- "Why is the grandeur of the dead called a thing of beauty?"

- “What is the message of the poem ‘A Thing of Beauty?’”
- “How does a thing of beauty bind us to the earth?”

9.3 Long Answer Type (6 marks)

Recent or recurring 6-mark questions include:

- “How does Keats establish the immortality of beauty in the poem?”
- “What sufferings do human beings face in life, and how does beauty redeem them?”
- “Comment on the image of the endless fountain of immortal drink.”
- “Critically appreciate *A Thing of Beauty* as a Romantic poem.”

Past Year Connection

Variants of the wreath-and-pall question have appeared in CBSE papers across multiple years. A safe revision target is to be able to write a 100-word paragraph on the wreath metaphor and a separate 100-word paragraph on the fountain image; together they cover the most common 6-mark prompts.

10 Quick-Revision Summary for the Last Night

If you are revising the night before the paper, fix these in your head.

10.1 One-Line Summary

Beauty in nature and culture is a permanent joy that binds us to the earth and lifts the pall of suffering from the spirit; it pours into our lives like an endless fountain from the edge of heaven.

10.2 Three Things Always Worth Quoting

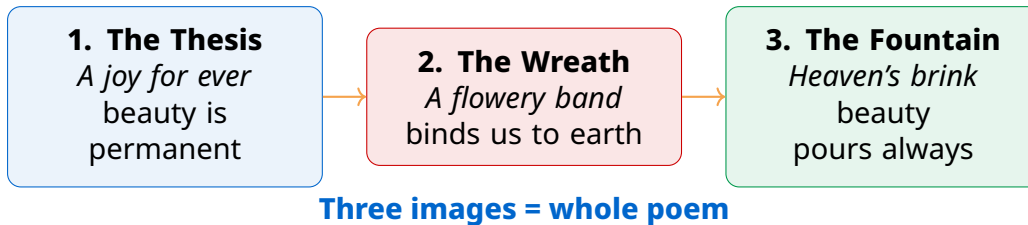
- *A thing of beauty is a joy for ever*: the thesis.
- *Wreathing / A flowery band to bind us to the earth*: the central metaphor.
- *An endless fountain of immortal drink, / Pouring unto us from the heaven’s brink*: the closing image.

10.3 Devices Worth Naming in Any Answer

- **Form**: heroic couplets in iambic pentameter, AA BB CC rhyme.
- **Metaphor**: the wreath, the pall, the fountain.
- **Personification**: “loveliness increases”, “some shape of beauty moves away the pall”.

- **Imagery:** sun, moon, trees, daffodils, streams, musk-roses, the mighty dead, lovely tales.
- **Antithesis:** beauty versus suffering throughout.

10.4 Last-Minute Triad to Memorise



A Final Memory Aid

TWF = Thesis, Wreath, Fountain.

Thesis (joy for ever) → **W**reath (flowery band, binds to earth) → **F**ountain (endless, heaven's brink).

Three words, in order, and the whole extract unfolds from them.

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