

## STUDY MATERIAL FOR DEGREE I (HONS), ENGLISH, PAPER-II

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### POEM- UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

#### POET- WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The poem '**Upon Westminster Bridge**' is composed by William Wordsworth, a great romantic poet. It was composed on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1802. In this poem Wordsworth talks about a wonderful experience he had while crossing the Westminster Bridge early in the morning. The Westminster Bridge is built on River Thames.

The poet is thrilled, as well as, astonished to see the exquisite beauty of London in the morning time that had remained unnoticed till now. He gives the description of scene of London and River Thames seen from Westminster Bridge early in the morning. In fact, London which is a busy city appeared different in the morning. It was far removed from the usual noise and activity of the city life. It seems the poet was spell bound to see the splendour of lovely morning which was in complete contrast with the bustling and noise of city life. Early morning brings freshness all over. The earth reveals the beauty and serenity that remains eclipsed due to industrial activity initiated by human being in the name of development.

*EARTH has not anything to show more fair:*

*Dull would he be of soul who could pass by*

*A sight so touching in its majesty:*

*This City now doth like a garment wear*

*The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,*

*Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie*

*Open unto the fields, and to the sky,*

*All bright and glittering in the smokeless air*

The poem '**Upon Westminster Bridge**' is a sonnet in Petrarchan form. In the first eight lines of the poem the poet expresses his delight over the pleasant scene and also claims that a person who is sensitive could not afford to ignore this beauty, calmness and serenity of morning time and pass by. Only callous or dull people can ignore such a touching sight. There is no hustle and bustle of the industrial and commercial activities seen as the poet crosses over the bridge. In fact, the quiet environment of the city that has spread all over seems that the city is wrapped in a garment of silence and beauty of morning time. The ships, the towers, the domes, the theatres and the temples lie under the clean and clear sky that is showering brightness and glitter all over. Like a true romantic poet, Wordsworth loves and enjoys the purity and serenity present in nature. The elaborate description of nature reveals his ability of keen observation. Everything was so unusual and exciting for the poet. The rare

beauty of early morning which he observes in every aspect of nature leaves him excited and enraptured.

*Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!*

*The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

The way the sun steeps beautifully over the valleys and hill to cast its first splendour fill the poet with joy and ecstasy. The city glistens in the morning sunshine that gives the city a cool and majestic look. The calmness spread all over is also deep. The river flows without any disturbance. As the ships and boats are all standing still and the river's free will to flow remains unhindered. Right from the beginning to the end the poem, the poet shares his excitement and praises the unique calmness present in the morning time. In absence of the usual activities the city appears to remain calm and still. It seems the city is lying asleep. Here, the city of London is compared to a '*mighty heart*' that is lying still and rendering unusual calmness and peace in the environment.

The poet was deeply inspired by the beautiful sight of London in the early morning. The unique calmness and beauty portrayed in the poem reveals the poet strong desire for a pure and peaceful environment. In a very simple and lucid way Wordsworth describes the wonders of morning beauty. The images like '*garment*', '*smokeless air*', '*first splendour*', '*river glideth at his own sweet will*', '*houses seem asleep*' and '*mighty heart is lying still*' truly depict the majestic beauty, as well as, the calmness of the city of London in the early morning. The poem as mentioned earlier is in Petrarchan style with an octave and sestet and the rhyming pattern is abba,abba, cdc,dcd.

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER**

<b>Poem:</b>	<b>UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE</b>
<b>Poet:</b>	<b>William Wordsworth</b>
<b>Born:</b>	<b>17 April, 1770</b>
<b>Place:</b>	<b>Cockermouth in Cumberland</b>
<b>Literary Period:</b>	<b>Romantic Age</b>
<b>Notable Works:</b>	<b>The Prelude, Tintern Abbey, Ode on Intimations of Immortality, Solitary Reaper, Upon Westminster Bridge and others.</b>