

**All the world's a stage,**

*And all the men and women merely players;*

*They have their exits and their entrances;*

*And one man in his time plays many parts,*

*His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,*

*Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;*

*And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel*

*And shining morning face, creeping like snail*

*Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,*

*Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad*

*Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,*

*Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,*

*Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,*

*Seeking the bubble reputation*

*Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,*

*In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,*

*With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,*

*Full of wise saws and modern instances;*

*And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts*

*Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,*

*With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;*

*His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.*

**The summary of the poem.**

Shakespeare considers the whole world a stage where men and women are only actors. They enter the stage when they are born and exit when they die. Every man, during his life time, plays seven roles based on age. In the first act, as an infant, he is wholly dependent on the mother or a nurse. Later, emerging as a school child, he slings his bag over his shoulder and creeps most reluctantly to school. His next act is that of a lover, busy composing ballads for his beloved and yearns for her attention. In the fourth stage, he is aggressive and ambitious and seeks reputation in all that he does. He promises solemnly to guard his country and becomes a soldier. As he grows older, with maturity and wisdom, he becomes a fair judge. During this stage, he is firm and serious. In the sixth act, he is seen with loose pantaloons and spectacles. His manly voice changes into a childish treble. The last scene of all is his second childhood. Slowly, he loses his faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste and exits from the roles of his life.

**2. From your understanding of the poem, answer the following questions briefly in a sentence or two.**

**a) What is the world compared to?**

The world is compared to a drama stage.

**b) “And they have their exits and their entrances” - What do the words ‘exits’ and ‘entrances’ mean?**

The words 'exits' and entrances' mean birth and death.

**c) What is the first stage of a human's life**

The first stage of a human's life is infant.

**d) Describe the second stage of life as depicted by Shakespeare.**

The second stage of a human's life is a school boy. He slings his bag over his shoulder and creeps most reluctantly to school.

**e) How does a man play a lover's role?**

A man plays a lover's role by busily composing ballads for his beloved and he yearns for her attention.

**f) Bring out the features of the fourth stage of a man as described by the poet.**

In the fourth stage, a man is aggressive and ambitious and seeks reputation in all that he does. He promises solemnly to guard his country and becomes a soldier.

**g) When does a man become a judge? How?**

As he grows older, with maturity and wisdom, he becomes a fair judge. During this stage, he is firm and serious.

**h) Which stage of man's life is associated with the 'shrunk shank'?**

The sixth stage of man's life is associated with the 'shrunk shank'.

**i) Why is the last stage called second childhood?**

Slowly, the man loses his faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste and exits from the roles of his life like a child.

**3. Explain the following lines briefly with reference to the context.**

a) *"They have their exits and their entrances;*

*And one man in his time plays many parts, ”*

Context : The above lines are taken from the poem “All the world’s a stage”, written by “William Shakeshpeare”. It is an extract from Shakespeare’s play “As you like it”.

Explanation: In a drama, every player enters the stage, acts his/her part and then exits. In the same way, We enter in this world by birth. We lead our life in different characters. We exit from this world at the time of our death.

Comment : Shakespeare’s comparison of man’s life with a drama stage is very opt.

***b) “Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,***

***Seeking the bubble reputation”.***

Context: The above lines are taken from the poem “All the world’s a stage”, written by “William Shakeshpeare”. It is an extract from Shakespeare’s play “As you like it”. According to the poet, every man has seven stages during his life time. These lines describe the fourth stage of a man’s attitude.

Explanation: In his fourth stage, as a soldier, a man is very jealous in his honour. He is ready to fight with his enemy. He wants to gain the unstable fame and name even by sacrificing his life on the battlefield.

Comment: Shakespeare here shows the fourth stage man’s attitude of yearning for reputation.

***c) “Is second childishness and mere oblivion;***

***Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.”***

Context: The above lines are taken from the poem “All the world’s a stage”, written by “William Shakeshpeare”. It is an extract from Shakespeare’s play “As you like it”. According to the poet, every man has seven stages during his life time. These lines describe the last stage of a man’s life.

Explanation: The last stage of a man is known as his second childhood. A child can not see, hear, smell and taste anything, during childhood. When a man grow old, slowly he loses his senses of

sight, hearing, smell and taste like the child. So this stage of his life is considered as second childhood.

Comment : Shakespeare clearly expresses his views on the final stage of a man.

**a) Describe the various stages of a man's life picturized in the poem "All the World's a stage."**

According to Shakespeare, the world is a stage and everyone is a player. He says that every man has seven stages during his life time. The first stage of a man is childhood. He plays in the arms of his mother. He often vomits and cries in this stage. In his second stage, the man is an unwilling school going student. He becomes a lover in his third stage. He is very busy composing ballads for his beloved and yearns for her attention. In the fourth stage, he is aggressive and ambitious. He seeks reputation in all what he does. He is ready to guard his country and becomes a soldier. In his fifth stage, he becomes a fair judge with maturity and wisdom. In the sixth stage, he is seen with loose pantaloons and spectacles. His manly voice changes into a childish treble. The last stage of all is his second childhood. Slowly, he loses his faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste and exits from the roles of his life. Thus Shakespeare pictures the seven stages of a man's life in the poem 'All the World's a Stage'.

**b) Shakespeare has skilfully brought out the parallels between the life of man and actors on stage. Elaborate this statement with reference to the poem.**

Shakespeare considers the whole world a stage where men and women are only actors. In a drama, every player enters the stage, acts his/her part and then exits. In the same way, We enter in this world by birth. We lead our life in different characters. We exit from this world at the time of our death. Shakespeare says that every man has seven stages during his life time. In a drama, a player loves his beloved for the sake of the play. At the end, the players say goodbyes and part away. In real life, husband and wife lead their life till death knocks at their door. Like the drama's end, death parts them. The players in the drama really wants the reputation for their performance. For fame and name, they give their best on the stage. A man in the fourth stage also is an aggressive and ambitious. He seeks reputation in all what he does, like the player in the drama. Thus Shakespeare has skilfully brought out the parallels between the life of man and actors on stage.

## **ESSAY**

### **Introduction:**

William Shakespeare is one of the most important literary figures of the English language. He compares the world to be a stage and life to a play and catalogues the seven stages of a man's life

### **Role of a man:**

According to Shakespeare, the world is a stage and everyone is a player. He says that every man has seven stages during his life time.

### **Seven Stages:**

- The first stage of a man is childhood. He plays in the arms of his mother. He often vomits and cries in this stage.
- In his second stage, he is a school going student. He slings his bag over his shoulder and creeps to school unwillingly.
- He becomes a lover in his third stage. He is very busy composing ballads for his beloved and yearns for her attention.
- In the fourth stage, he is aggressive and ambitious. He is willing to die in a battle to earn 'the bubble reputation'. He is ready to guard his country and becomes a soldier.
- In his fifth stage, he becomes a fair judge with maturity and wisdom. He has a pot belly. He is firm and serious.
- In the sixth stage, he is seen with loose pantaloons and spectacles. He is a thin old man. His manly voice changes into a childish treble.
- The last stage of all is his second childhood. Slowly, he loses his faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste and exits from the roles of his life.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus Shakespeare pictures the seven stages of a man's life in the poem 'All the World's a Stage'.

Life is like a drama, and we all are actors in it, playing our individual roles