

My Past, Not Yet Past

Text Type: Poem
Suggested finishing time: 15 mins



Listen!

Let's Think!

1. How do you record memorable moments?
2. What is your most unforgettable childhood memory?

By Denise Lam

- Flipping through a dusty photo album,
I pass memory's door back to the distant past.
That year returns, so vivid in my mind.
I was a student, 12, of the skinny kind.
- 5 But now I am an office guy, 30, of the whining kind.
- I sit on the sofa with my stuffed dolphin,
My eyes closing but my mind's opening,
And shards of memories resurface, flowing and flowing.
Chairs, desks, and those familiar faces,
- 10 All come flooding in at once — clearly seen everywhere.
- 'Good morning, Sir!' 'See you tomorrow, Miss Lau.'
They were my guides. But where are they now?
Now, nowhere can my teachers be found.
What now lingers is orders like, 'Be on time! Don't fall behind!'
- 15 Wasn't homework good? Weren't my teachers too kind?
- 'Turn off the TV! Study hard, or you'll regret!'
They are annoying, I used to think — and yet,
Having trouble here, there, and everywhere,
Now — only now! — I know it is called love and care.
- 20 Overwhelmed by my schoolmates' long-gone faces,
I recall the games we played,
And the silly names they called every single day.
Those names! They used to hang clouds over me,
But are now sweet memories — After all, *c'est la vie!*
- 25 Summer departs, leaves fall, snow melts.
People age but nothing helps.
Oh. Dear Memory, you're a star that always stays.
Looking at you, I feel like that young boy once again.

~240 words



Looking into Grammar

The adverb 'nowhere' means 'not in any place', while 'everywhere' means 'in every place'. Note that no prepositions should be placed before them.

✓ Joe looked for his wallet **everywhere** (✗ in everywhere).

? Circle an example each of 'nowhere' and 'everywhere' in stanzas 2 and 3.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the poem. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. Denise starts _____ after _____.

- A. having a pleasant dream...listening to a CD album
- B. talking to himself...talking to a skinny boy
- C. daydreaming...seeing a door from afar
- D. thinking about the past...looking at some old photos



2. The poem is mainly about Denise's memories _____.

- A. of his family
- B. at a college
- C. in a tour
- D. in the company

2 Think about who the writer mentioned and what they had said or done.

3. In line 2, 'I pass memory's door back to the distant past' means _____.

- A. 'I let go of the past.'
- B. 'I feel ready to be an adult.'
- C. 'I begin to remember things in the past.'
- D. 'I feel I have grown up.'

4. Read line 12. The word 'they' refers to _____.

- A. Denise's schoolmates
- B. Denise's teachers
- C. the familiar faces
- D. the thoughts in mind

5. In lines 25-26, what does Denise want to say?

- A. 'Time never waits.'
- B. 'The climate is changing.'
- C. 'I miss last year!'
- D. 'Winter is the last season in a year.'



6. Which of the following is TRUE about Denise?

- A. He is a whiner.
- B. He used to have a stuffed shark.
- C. He cherishes the memories that call to mind.
- D. He once saw his classroom flooded.

6 Underline the keywords in each statement. Locate the related words in the poem.

More to Take Away



On Facebook, a popular social networking site, the function 'On This Day' is launched for users to re-read their own photos and posts. However, Facebook received some complaints about it, as some users thought it revived memories of events they would rather forget.

Self-evaluation Checklist (✓/x)

- 1. I understood most of the information provided in the passage.
- 2. I guessed the meaning of unknown words or phrases correctly.
- 3. I managed to answer questions by drawing inferences.
- 4. I identified and understood the writer's / characters' feelings.
- 5. I could identify and summarise the main idea of the passage.
- 6. The two reading strategies taught in this module enabled me to read more effectively.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the poem. For question 3, answer in a complete sentence.

1. In stanza 1, 'mind' and 'kind' are a pair of rhyming words. Find FOUR other pairs of rhyming words in stanzas 4 and 5.

- (i) ' _____ ' and ' _____ '
- (ii) ' _____ ' and ' _____ '
- (iii) ' _____ ' and ' _____ '
- (iv) ' _____ ' and ' _____ '



2. What is the main idea of stanza 3?

- A. Denise had two teachers in the past.
- B. Denise wishes someone could be his guide.
- C. Denise often failed to submit his homework in the past.
- D. Denise misses his teachers when he experiences difficulties at work.

3. Who does the word 'they' in stanza 4 most probably refer to? Explain your answer.

3 In what context is the sentence in line 16 probably heard?

4. In stanza 5, Denise's school days seem _____ to him.

- A. warm
- B. distressing
- C. bittersweet
- D. embarrassing

4 Is Denise's tone positive, negative or a mixture of both?

5. In each line, there MAY be a wrong word. Underline it and write a word that expresses the correct idea in the right-hand column. If not, put a tick (✓).

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| (i) The writer's old <u>clothes</u> remind him of his days as | <u>photos</u> |
| (ii) a commuter. Once again, he can see his old classroom. | _____ |
| (iii) He compares his old schoolmates to his boss | _____ |
| (iv) now: they are a lot nicer towards him. He also recalls the time | _____ |
| (v) he spent with his schoolmates: some good things happened, | _____ |
| (vi) but now they have become sweet photos for him. | _____ |

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos in the flow chart below with the names of life stages from the word box.



Word Craft

C'est la vie (Refer to P.44.)

Some French expressions are borrowed into everyday English usage.

- e.g.** à la mode (=in the most modern style)
du jour (=the particular type available today)
RSVP (= [répondez s'il vous plaît] please reply)

Let's Discuss!

1. Do you know any adult who takes a very different path from the one above?
2. Is it rational to criticise those who dare to be different? Why or why not?