



UNIT 3

On His Blindness

John Milton



Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- Ask and answer questions for a range of communicative purposes.
- Critique reading interpretations, taking account of others' views on reading.
- Provide an objective summary of a range of texts.
- Clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
 - Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
 - Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
 - Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Write and critique (self/peer checking) the final draft after editing and proofreading. Ensure that the topic sentence of each paragraph contains the main idea of the essay/piece of writing and also that each paragraph develops the idea of its topic sentence. Use the technique of hook, and lead-in sentences to develop the flow of thought.
- Apply skills and strategies for idea generation, selection, development, organization and revision for a variety of writing purposes and text types.



Pre-reading:

- How would you feel if you suddenly lost an important ability such as sight, and how might it affect your goals in life?
- Do you think a person can still serve the society even if he is unable to work actively?



When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one **talent** which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning **chide**;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light **denied**?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That **murmur**, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his **mild** yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only **stand** and **wait**."



While-reading

Why does the poet feel worried about his "talent" in these lines?



While-reading

What does the line "They also serve who only stand and wait" mean?

Theme

The theme of "On His Blindness" by John Milton revolves around patience, faith, and acceptance of [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)] God's will. The poet expresses his inner struggle after losing his eyesight and fears that he can no longer serve [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)] God effectively. He worries that his talent has become useless and that he may be judged for not using it. However, the poem shifts from doubt to reassurance through the voice of patience. It teaches that [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)] God does not demand great deeds from everyone, especially from those who are unable to act. True service lies in obedience, humility, and trust in divine.

About the author

John Milton was a great English poet and intellectual of the seventeenth century. He was born in 1608 in London and received a highly educated upbringing. Milton studied at Cambridge University, where he developed a deep interest in literature, languages, and philosophy. He is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, which is considered one of the greatest works in English literature. Milton strongly believed in freedom, truth, and religious values, which are reflected in his writings. During his life, he became completely blind, yet he

continued to write with remarkable determination. His poetry often deals with themes of faith, morality, and human struggle. He remains one of the most influential poets in the history of English literature.



Glossary

Words	Meanings
chide	to scold, rebuke
denied	refused, not allowed
ere	before (an old English word)
lodged	kept, placed in a particular position
mild	gentle, not harsh
murmur	a soft complaint; low, unclear sound
stand	to remain firm, stay in a position, to remain patient
talent	intellect
wait	to stay calm patiently



Reading and Critical Thinking

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What does the poet mean by "my light is spent"?
2. Why does the poet feel that his "talent" is useless?
3. What fear does the poet express about serving God [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)]?
4. What question does the poet ask about [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)] God's expectations?
5. Who answers the poet's doubt in the poem?
6. What is meant by "bear his mild yoke"?
7. How does the poem describe those who actively serve [Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)] God?
8. What is the meaning of the line "They also serve who only stand and wait"?
9. What is the central message or moral of the poem?

For the
Teacher:



- Guide students to read the poem slowly and attentively, focusing on the emotions and struggles expressed by the poet.

B. Choose the correct option.

1. What does "my light is spent" mean?
a) lost hope b) lost sight c) lost wealth d) lost friends
2. The poet worries his Talent is...
a) useful still b) completely lost c) useless now d) overrated gift
3. "Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?" shows the poet...
a) expresses anger b) asks doubt c) seeks wealth d) plans travel
4. "Bear his mild yoke" means...
a) carry burden b) obey patiently c) work actively d) suffer silently
5. People unable to serve actively...
a) are useless b) can serve c) must work d) should cry
6. The main lesson of the poem is _____ matters.
a) wealth b) patience c) courage d) strength
7. "Ere half my days" means...
a) early life b) midlife point c) night time d) noon hour
8. "They also serve who only stand and wait" means...
a) active work b) patient service c) physical standing d) tireless effort

Critical Interpretation means carefully examining and evaluating how a text has been understood or explained. It involves judging whether an interpretation is accurate, supported by evidence from the text, and logically explained, while also considering alternative viewpoints.

Example: A student says, "The story shows that the main character is selfish." Another student critiques this observation, "I disagree because the character shares his food with others, which shows kindness. The interpretation should be supported with evidence from the text."

C. Why is it important to support your interpretation of a text with evidence?



Vocabulary and Grammar

Using Context to Clarify Meaning means understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words or ideas by looking at the surrounding words, sentences, or situation in a text. Context clues help readers make sense of difficult vocabulary without always using a dictionary.

Example:

"The desert was arid, with no rain for months and very little vegetation." Here, the words "no rain" and "very little vegetation" help us understand that *arid* means very dry.

A. What are context clues, and how do they help you understand new words?

Recognizing Word Patterns means identifying common spelling, sound, or structural patterns in words, such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words, to help understand their meanings and pronunciation. This skill helps readers decode new words more easily and improves vocabulary.

Example: If a student knows the pattern “un-” means “not,” they can understand that *unhappy* means “not happy” and *uncertain* means “not certain.” Similarly, recognizing the suffix “-ful” in *helpful* or *careful* shows that the word describes “full of” something.

B. What does the prefix “re-” mean? Give one example word using it.

Using Reference Materials (Dictionaries, Glossaries, Thesauruses) means consulting tools that provide meanings, spellings, pronunciations, and related words to better understand and use language accurately. These resources help readers and writers clarify unfamiliar words, expand vocabulary, and choose appropriate expressions.

Example: While reading, a student finds the word “*fragile*.” They check a dictionary to learn that it means “easily broken.” Look at a glossary for its use in the lesson, and use a thesaurus to find similar words like *delicate* or *breakable*.

C. When you come across a new word in a text, which reference material would you use first and why?

Verifying Preliminary Meaning (Double-Checking Guess) means confirming whether your initial understanding of a word or idea in a text is correct by re-reading, using context clues, or consulting reference materials. This helps ensure that your interpretation is accurate and not based on misunderstanding.

Example: A student reads the sentence, “*The river current was swift,*” and guesses that *swift* means “fast.” To verify, the student re-reads the sentence and checks a dictionary, confirming that *swift* indeed means “moving quickly.”

D. What steps can you take to verify the meaning of an unfamiliar word in a text?



Oral Communication Skills

Asking and answering questions for a range of communicative purposes means using questions and responses in conversations to gain information, clarify

understanding, express ideas, or continue discussions in different contexts like interviews, classroom discussions, group work, or everyday conversation.

A. Classroom Activity

Pair Work Interview: Students will pair up and role-play an interview. One student will act as a reporter and the other as a young entrepreneur. The reporter will ask at least five purposeful questions e.g., about the project's idea, challenges, goals, etc. Then they will switch roles. Afterwards, each student will share one interesting answer they heard with the class.

B. Why is it important to ask meaningful questions during a conversation or interview?



Writing Skills

Final Draft Writing & Critiquing means producing a polished version of a piece of writing after revising and editing it, and then carefully evaluating it to check clarity, organization, grammar, and effectiveness. It involves improving the draft based on feedback and ensuring the writing is clear, correct, and meaningful for the reader.

Example: A student first writes an essay about pollution, then revises it by improving sentences and correcting grammar mistakes. In the final draft, the essay is well-organized and clear. A classmate then critiques it by saying, *"Your ideas are clear, but you can improve the conclusion by adding a strong closing statement."*

A. Why is it important to revise and edit before writing the final draft?

B. What should you look for when critiquing someone's final draft?