

Sonnet 116

William Shakespeare

How does the speaker define love by describing what it refuses to do?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Sonnet 116 - complete poem

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	Let me not to the marriage of true minds
END	I never writ, nor no man ever loved.
PASSAGE ID	sec-sonnet116-01

THE MOVE

Build a definition from repeated negatives and tests

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Rather than beginning with a sentimental description, the speaker repeatedly says what love is not: it does not alter, bend, or become Time's fool. Those refusals create a standard that the later metaphors of a fixed mark and guiding star reinforce.

MARK

Underline each “not” or refusal. Circle the two central metaphors for constancy. Box references to Time. Star the final conditional claim.

NOTICE

- What kinds of change does the speaker say true love resists?
- How do the fixed mark and star develop the same idea differently?
- Why end by staking the speaker's writing and all human love on the definition?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does the speaker define love by describing what it refuses to do? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

The speaker defines love through tests of constancy. True love does not change simply because circumstances or people change, and the fixed-mark and star metaphors present it as something stable enough to guide others even when time alters physical beauty.

EVIDENCE

Use one negative definition and one metaphor from the sonnet.

WATCH FOR

Do not paraphrase the poem as “love lasts forever” without explaining the specific pressures - alteration and time - that the speaker says love withstands.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 9 · LESSON 294

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TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Sonnet 116 - complete poem

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Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

END

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Underline each “not” or refusal. Circle the two central metaphors for constancy. Box references to Time. Star the final conditional claim.
2. NOTICE What kinds of change does the speaker say true love resists? How do the fixed mark and star develop the same idea differently? Why end by staking the speaker’s writing and all human love on the definition?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does the speaker define love by describing what it refuses to do?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.