

The Cry of the Children

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How does Browning make the children's suffering function as an argument against the society around them?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Closing section - the children answer the nation

TEACHER SETUP

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

START	Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,
END	Than the strong man in his wrath!
PASSAGE ID	sec-browning-cry-01

THE MOVE

Analyze how a poem converts emotional testimony into an accusation against public values.

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The poem does more than invite pity. In the closing movement, the children's voices contradict what adults preach, and their physical suffering becomes evidence against the moral legitimacy of the nation.

MARK

Underline words tied to what adults preach or claim. Circle images of the children's bodies. Box the direct question to the nation.

NOTICE

- What exactly are the children "disproving"?
- How does bodily imagery make the argument harder to evade?
- Why is the nation addressed directly near the end?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does Browning make the children's suffering function as an argument against the society around them? 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

Browning turns suffering into counterevidence: the adults' moral claims are disproved by the children's lived conditions. Their bodies become a public indictment, so pity is converted into a charge of hypocrisy.

EVIDENCE

Use one statement about what society preaches and one image of bodily suffering.

WATCH FOR

Do not stop at "the poem is sad." Explain how emotion becomes evidence in an argument.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

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WORK

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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

Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,

END

Than the strong man in his wrath!

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 words tied to what adults preach or claim. Circle images of the children's bodies. Box the direct question to the nation.
2. NOTICE What exactly are the children "disproving"? How does bodily imagery make the argument harder to evade? Why is the nation addressed directly near the end?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does Browning make the children's suffering function as an argument against the society around them?
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.