









Ozymandias KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Context – <i>Ozymandias</i> was written by Percy Bysshe Shelley, and was first published in January 1818.	
<p>Percy Bysshe Shelley – Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was one of the major English Romantic Poets. Shelley was not particularly famous in his lifetime, but his popularity grew steadily after his death. Shelley was involved in a close circle of poets and writers, for example his second wife Mary Shelley (the author of <i>Frankenstein</i>) and Lord Byron. His poems have influenced a number of social and political movements since, particularly his theories on non-violence in protest and political action.</p> 	<p>Ramesses II – Ramesses II, also known as Ramesses the Great, is often regarded as the most powerful and celebrated Egyptian pharaoh of the Egyptian Empire. In Greek, his name is often translated as 'Ozymandias.' He led several successful military expeditions, including to the Levant and into Nubia. In the early part of his reign, he built many cities, temples and monuments. Estimates of his age of death vary, but most suggest around 90 or 91 – a reign of over 66 years!</p> 
<p>Ancient Egypt – Ancient Egypt refers to a civilisation of ancient north-east Africa, along the lower reaches of the Nile River. At its peak, Ancient Egypt held both significant territory and power over the surrounding areas, including the Near East. Part of the success of the civilisation has been attributed to the ability to adapt to the conditions of the Nile Valley for agriculture, the formation of military forces, and the influence of scholars and education – all overseen by a 'Pharaoh' or 'Emperor.'</p> 	<p>Egyptian Ruins – A number of remnants of Egyptian culture exist as ruins today. Each complex houses the tomb of a different Egyptian pharaoh, and in front of them lies the Sphinx. One of the largest (and certainly the most famous of these) is the Pyramids of Giza (just outside Cairo). The Valley of Kings is located opposite Luxor on the west bank of the River Nile, where pharaohs (including Ramesses II) were mummified and buried in deep tombs along with sacred artifacts.</p> 

Language/Structural Devices	
<p>Caesurae – Caesurae is a break in the rhythm within a line – Shelley does this at several points throughout the poem, each time to create significant effects. For example, the first break is after "Who said" on the second line. This pause mimics the traveller's sharp intake of breath before recalling the details of the scene. Another example comes after 'Stands in the desert.' The use of the full stop at this point reinforces the isolation of the statue amongst the vast desert.</p> <p>Quote: – "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert. . . "</p>	<p>Varied Verbs– Varied verbs are used to show the reader what Ozymandias was like as a ruler e.g. the verbs 'frown', 'sneer', and 'command' make the reader consider Ozymandias as a tyrant-like ruler. This influences the reader away from sympathising with the ruler's fall from grace. Varied verbs are also used to show that the emperor's power no longer stands in the way it once did, for example 'shattered', 'stand', 'stretch' show its decay and isolation.</p> <p>Quote: "Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,"</p>
<p>Alliteration – Shelley uses the sounds within words to create harsh and soft enunciations across lines, in keeping with the tone and meanings that the poem addresses. For example, when describing Ozymandias' expression, Shelley repeats the harsh 'c' sound in 'cold command' to add to the idea that this was a harsh leader. Conversely, the soft 'l' sound is repeated in 'lone and level sands,' emphasising the beauty of nature.</p> <p>Quote: "And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,</p>	<p>Juxtaposition/ Oxymoron – The juxtaposition of contrasting vocabulary helps to show the irony in Ozymandias' bold statements of power. For example, the words etched onto the pedestal give an idea of immortality and grandeur: 'King' and 'Mighty' contrast sharply with the reality of 'Nothing' and 'decay.' Another example is the use of the oxymoron in the term 'colossal Wreck.'</p> <p>Quote: "Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair! Nothing beside remains. Round the decay"</p>
<p>Form/Meter – The poem is a sonnet (it is in one stanza and has 14 lines) however it does not fit the rhyme scheme of a typical sonnet. Some lines are split/separated by full stops. It is written in iambic pentameter, meaning that each line contains 5 stressed and 5 unstressed syllables. This creates a persistent rhythm across the poem – relentless like time.</p> <p>Quote: "Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away."</p>	<p>Structure – The opening line and a half are the narrator's words (up until the colon) at which point the traveller's words make up the rest of the poem. This makes the message seem more objective – these aren't the thoughts of the narrator, rather the musings of someone who has visited the place first-hand. The traveller is merely recalling what has been seen.</p> <p>Quote: "I met a traveller from an antique land, Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone"</p>

Themes – A theme is an idea or message that runs throughout a text.	
<p>Transience – The 'colossal wreck' that has become of Ozymandias' statue is a clear demonstration of the idea that everything, no matter how grand and vast it once was, is temporary, and will fall victim to the sands of time. Shelley's underlying message is exceptionally bleak – in time, nothing that any of us do will eventually matter.</p> 	
<p>Power and Oppression – Ozymandias' power, although once substantial, is one attribute that has failed to stand the test of time – the surroundings of his ruins making his assertions of power seem ridiculous. His oppressive nature ("hand that mocked, heart that fed") can oppress no more. Shelley doubtlessly intended to send a message to those in his contemporary society who abused positions of power and oppressed others – it won't last forever.</p> 	

Line-by-Line Analysis			
STANZA	LINE	POEM	ANALYSIS
1	1	I met a traveller from an antique land,	Lines 1-4 – The idea of a traveller from an antique land grabs the reader's attention, as there is promise of a story. 'Antique' suggests the subject matter is old and precious. The adjectives 'trunkless' 'half-sunk' and 'shattered' describe what the 'vast' statues have become – they appear to be a shadow of what they once were.
	2	Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone	
	3	Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,	
	4	Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,	
	5	And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,	Lines 5-8 – The facial expression of the statue is described in some detail – the 'frown', 'wrinkled lip' and 'sneer' suggesting that the authoritative and oppressive nature of the ruler was 'well...read' by the sculptor. Alliteration of the harsh 'c' sound is used in 'cold command', possibly to reflect the ruler's harsh command. The traveller suggests that these features of the ruler remain imprinted upon lifeless objects, even though the ruler and the sculptor are now dead. Line 8 gives more details of the King's nature.
	6	Tell that its sculptor well those passions read	
	7	Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,	
	8	The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;	Lines 9-11 – The engraving on the pedestal gives an indication of the power that Ozymandias once had. Whoever had the statue commissioned (likely Ozymandias himself) believed that the remnants of his legacy would still intimidate visitors/observers far into the future. Line 11 is one of the most famous lines in poetry – "Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!" is a proud boast of his immense power. The imperative verb and the use of the exclamation mark gives this sense of authority and animation.
	9	And on the pedestal, these words appear:	
	10	My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;	Lines 12-14 – When juxtaposed with the description of what lay around the broken statue, the ironic truth in relation to these boasts is revealed. 'Nothing' and 'decay' are words used to demonstrate that the ruler is no longer powerful. The 'lone and level' sands (a metaphor for the sands of time) remains, and has brought the powerful ruler (literally in this case) to his knees.
	11	Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!	
	12	Nothing beside remains. Round the decay	
	13	Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare	
	14	The lone and level sands stretch far away."	

Poems for Comparison	Influences on the Poet
<p>Charge of the Light Brigade</p> <p><i>Ozymandias</i> can be compared and contrasted with transience (COLB aims to create a positive memory of the soldiers)</p>	<p>Shelley ordered a copy of <i>Bibliotheca Historica</i> in 1812, which contained a section on a statue of Ramesses II: <i>One of these, made in a sitting posture, is the greatest in all Egypt, the measure of his foot exceeding seven cubits...This piece is not only commendable for its greatness, but admirable for its cut and workmanship, and the excellency of the stone. In so great a work there is not to be discerned the least flaw, or any other blemish. Upon it there is this inscription: – 'I am Ozymandias, king of kings; if any would know how great I am, and where I lie, let him excel me in any of my works.'</i> (l, p.53)</p>
<p>London</p> <p><i>Ozymandias</i> can be compared and contrasted with this poem in the approach to the theme of the <u>power and oppression</u></p>	