

## Homework: Beauty

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Despite being universally experienced and valued, beauty is not easily defined. It seems to be that which gives pleasure to the senses, especially sight, but it also appeals to our minds and emotions.

Many people define beauty as that which brings enjoyment to the person who looks or contemplates. When we say something is beautiful, are we recommending to others that they should take delight in it? We know that beauty is subjective, but can it be objective? Can we argue rationally about whether something is beautiful?

Is beauty a cultural thing, based on the common consensus of the time? Or is there a “true beauty,” which we find in all cultures and times? Is natural beauty ever better than constructed beauty, such as in art or music? What about augmented beauty? There is a dark side to beauty. Physical beauty is highly valued in American society and has caused eating disorders and a huge rise in plastic surgery.

Do beauty and happiness go together?

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Our hearts are drunk with a beauty our eyes could never see.

—*George W. Russell*

By plucking her petals, you do not gather the beauty of the flower.

—*Rabindrath Tagore*

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.

—*John Muir*

Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart.

—*Kahlil Gibran*

That which is striking and beautiful is not always good, but that which is good is always beautiful.

—*Ninon de L'Enclos*

Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty—they merely move it from their faces into their hearts.

—*Martin Buxbaum*

When you have only two pennies left in the world, buy a loaf of bread with one and a lily with the other.

—*Chinese Proverb*

“Beauty Tips” by Audrey Hepburn, actress, who was an underground carrier for Belgium during WW II as a teenager:

1. For attractive lips: speak words of kindness.
2. For lovely eyes: seek out the good in people.
3. For a slim figure: share your food with the hungry.
4. For beautiful hair: let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.
5. For poise: walk with the knowledge you’ll never walk alone.
6. People: even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anybody. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you’ll find one at the end of your arm. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.
7. The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides. True beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It is the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she shows. And the beauty of a woman only grows with the passing of the years.

### *Questions to Ponder*

- What part does beauty play in your life? Where do you find it in your life?
- Has your opinion of what is beautiful changed over the years? What caused that change?
- Do you believe that beauty is in the eye of the beholder or that you can be objective about beauty? Are you influenced by other people’s opinions of what is beautiful?
- What role does beauty play in the animal world?

### *Suggested Activities*

- Make a list of the most beautiful things you have ever seen. Do you see a recurring theme? What is it?
- Write a haiku about beauty or something you think is beautiful. (A haiku has three lines, with the following syllables in each line: first line = 5 syllables, second line = 7 syllables, and third line = 5 syllables.)
- Write a letter to teenage girls, helping them balance the media focus on physical beauty and the human reality.