

Name:

Date:

**“An Obstacle” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman &  
“Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas**

Directions: Fill out the graphic organizer to compare and contrast the two poems.

	<b>“An Obstacle” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman</b>	<b>“Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas</b>
What obstacle is present in each poem?		
In your own words, write a brief summary about what each poem is about.		
Who is the antagonist in each poem?		
What is the setting of each poem?		

What is the tone of each poem? What textual evidence supports your answer?

PREVIEW

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What is one specific example of imagery? Explain the significance.

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Find specific examples of TWO of the following in each poem:

*Metaphor*  
*Simile*  
*Alliteration*  
*Repetition*  
*Assonance*  
*Consonance*  
*Personification*

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Identify the universal theme of each poem.

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*Constructed Responses: Answer each of the following questions in a fully developed paragraph.*

1) Compare and contrast how both speakers show resilience. What message does each poet send about life? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

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2) Who do you consider the most resilient person in history or in your own life? How did being resilient play a key role in this person's success?

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**Teacher's Note:** Thank you for your purchase! Due to copyright law, I am unable to provide a full text of the poem "Do not go gentle into that good night" by Dylan Thomas. You can access the full text by clicking the link below or by searching for the poem through any search engine. You can either print copies for your students or have students view the text digitally. If you have any questions about this product, please feel free to email me at [chompingatthelit@gmail.com](mailto:chompingatthelit@gmail.com)

**Full Text:** ["Do not go gentle into that good night" by Dylan Thomas](#)

### Answer Key

#### **"An Obstacle" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman & "Do not go gentle into that good night" by Dylan Thomas**

Directions: Fill out the graphic organizer to compare and contrast the two poems.

	<b>"An Obstacle" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman</b>	<b>"Do not go gentle into that good night" by Dylan Thomas</b>
What obstacle is present in each poem?	The speaker in this poem is facing the everyday prejudice women faced during the nineteenth century. She uses the extended metaphor of hiking up a mountain to say that "prejudice" (a man) stands in the way of her path. She must follow this path to complete her everyday tasks and obligations: "Important business of my own, And other people's too." She most likely is alluding to obstacles such as discrimination, misconceptions, partiality, and misogyny that disrupt her daily life. In the poem, Prejudice does not take her request to move seriously.	The speaker is struggling to let go of his father, though his father is clearly near death. The speaker is trying to postpone the inevitable by pleading for a little more time. The obstacle the speaker faces is letting go of his father who he loves dearly. The father is facing the obstacle of poor health or old age.

In your own words, write a brief summary about what each poem is about.	This poem is about a woman who is trying to live her life, facing everyday battles head on, but her efforts to merely exist are thwarted by the prejudice she faces as a woman. The speaker is hiking up a mountain until a man—a personification of Prejudice—gets in her way. She tries multiple ways to be respectful and get him to move, but she is unsuccessful. After begging the man to step aside, she decides the best way to go about her journey is to keep hiking up the mountain as if Prejudice doesn't exist entirely.	This poem is a son's plea to his dying father to hold onto life a little bit longer and not let himself die. The speaker wants his dad to fight death with defiance and dignity. It appears that his father has either peacefully surrendered or otherwise resigned himself to his fate, but the speaker does not accept this reality. The speaker begs his father to fight boldly and bravely against the impending truth.
Who is the antagonist in each poem?	The speaker is fighting against society as a whole, but more so her struggle is against men who discriminate against women. The speaker refers to Prejudice as a "him" and "he." She calls him a "colossal mule" and "incubus" to emphasize his size as well as her frustration that he won't listen to her.	Nature is the force which the speaker wants his father to fight. He wants his father to ignore common sense that wise men accept death when it is time because even wise men, good men, wild men, and grave men need more time to make amends and live happily.
What is the setting of each poem?	The setting of the poem is on a mountaintop. The mountain is a metaphor for life's journey. The poem was published in 1884 during a time where the opportunities for women were limited to traditional domestic roles and men were considered superior.	The poem was written in 1947, but there's no specific reference to where it takes place. One can infer that they are in a hospital or at home because his father is very close to death. As the speaker is pleading and praying for just a little bit more time, the father is most likely on his deathbed.

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What is the tone of each poem? What textual evidence supports your answer?	<p>The tone begins very direct and sincere, simply telling readers the narrative of what happened when she crossed a man (Prejudice) on the mountain. The tone then changes to surprised, angry, and frustrated that this man will not listen to her or move. She becomes hopeless in the situation she finds herself in. In the end, her tone is confident and proud that she just ignores the man—essentially what he did to her.</p> <p>Frustrated: "I pelted and belabored him." "And then I begged him on my knees; I might be kneeling still."</p> <p>Dignified: "And I walked directly through him, As if he wasn't there!"</p>	<p>The tone is desperate and passionate. The speaker suggests that even in this frail state, his father could be happy living longer.</p> <p>Desperate: "Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray."</p>
What is one specific example of imagery? Explain the significance.	<p>Answers will vary.</p> <p>"The mountain mists were rising fast, The sun was sinking slow -- When a sudden inspiration came, As sudden winds do blow."</p> <p>The speaker is explaining that she is running out of time to complete her obligations. The fact that the sun was going down suggests she had to think of a solution before it was too late. The wind is symbolic of a new idea hitting her.</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p> <p>"Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright. Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay."</p> <p>The speaker is saying that the last wave of good men are close to death as the wave "breaks." He suggests that these men must fight to stay alive to see how much greater and beautiful their deeds could shine.</p>

<p>Find specific examples of TWO of the following in each poem:</p> <p><i>Metaphor</i>  <i>Simile</i>  <i>Alliteration</i>  <i>Repetition</i>  <i>Assonance</i>  <i>Consonance</i>  <i>Personification</i></p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p> <p>Personification: Gilman personifies prejudice by treating prejudice as a man that is in her way as she tries to complete her obligations. "When I ran against a Prejudice, That quite cut off the view."</p> <p>Simile: "I argued like a Solomon" meaning she argued wisely.</p> <p>Alliteration: "The <u>m</u>ountain <u>m</u>ists were rising fast."</p>	<p>Answers will vary.</p> <p>Consonance: "Do not go gentle into that good night"</p> <p>Assonance: "the dying of the light"</p> <p>Repetition: "Rage, rage against the dying of the light." And "Do not go gentle into that good night."</p> <p>Metaphor: "That good night" means death.</p> <p>Metaphor: "the light" means life.</p>
<p>Identify the universal theme of each poem.</p>	<p>Prejudice is foolish and relentless, but it can be overcome with tenacity.</p>	<p>No matter what choices you've made in life and even if death is inevitable, everyone should fight to stay alive as long as they can.</p>



## Answers Will Vary

### **“An Obstacle” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman & “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas**

*Constructed Responses: Answer each of the following questions in a fully developed paragraph.*

1) Compare and contrast how both speakers show resilience. What message does each poet send about life? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

In “An Obstacle” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the speaker shows resilience by trying multiple ways to overcome the prejudice she faces as a woman during the nineteenth century. The speaker is traveling up a mountain, a metaphor for climbing uphill in life. She faces adversities and hardships along the way which are all personified as a “huge and high” man who will not allow her to pass. The woman speaks to the man politely, she reasons with him, she argues with him, she swears at him, she yells at him, she begs him on her knees, and nothing works. She states, “So I sat before him helpless, In an ecstasy of woe.” It seems like she has given up until she finally decides she is just going to ignore him. All of these actions are representative of being resilient in the face of adversity. In the poem “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas, the speaker also insists on fighting back in the face of adversity. Though the speaker is struggling with the potential loss of a parent, it is his father who must overcome the obstacle of death. To do so, he must “rage against the dying of the light” and resist any urges to let go of life. The speaker argues that many different types of men fight death because there is always something more to live for. The father shows resilience because he is clearly close to death—either from illness or old age—but he has the ability to bounce back and stay alive if he chooses to fight. Both speakers are adamant about continuing to live life, no matter the obstacles or difficulties. In Gilman's poem, she shows resilience by ignoring the obstacle in front of her. In Thomas' poem, the speaker shows resilience by refusing to accept what is bound to happen. Their perspectives on life are similar because they strongly believe no matter how painful life can get, it is still worth fighting for. Both poets not only stand up to the obstacles against them, but they do so with dignity.

2) Who do you consider the most resilient person in history or in your own life? How did being resilient play a key role in this person's success?

Answers will vary.

**“An Obstacle” (1884)**  
**by Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

I was climbing up a mountain-path  
With many things to do,  
Important business of my own,  
And other people's too,  
When I ran against a Prejudice  
That quite cut off the view.

My work was such as could not wait,  
My path quite clearly showed,  
My strength and time were limited,  
I carried quite a load;  
And there that hulking Prejudice  
Sat all across the road.

So I spoke to him politely,  
For he was huge and high,  
And begged that he would move a bit  
And let me travel by.  
He smiled, but as for moving! --  
He didn't even try.

And then I reasoned quietly  
With that colossal mule:  
My time was short -- no other path --  
The mountain winds were cool.  
I argued like a *Solomon*;  
He sat there like a fool.

Then I flew into a passion,  
and I danced and howled and swore.  
I pelted and **belabored** him  
Till I was stiff and sore;  
He got as mad as I did --  
But he sat there as before.

And then I begged him on my knees;  
I might be kneeling still  
If so I hoped to move that mass  
Of **obdurate** ill-will --  
As well invite the monument  
To vacate *Bunker Hill*!

So I sat before him helpless,  
In an ecstasy of woe --  
The mountain mists were rising fast,  
The sun was sinking slow --  
When a sudden inspiration came,  
As sudden winds do blow.

I took my hat, I took my stick,  
My load I settled fair,  
I approached that awful **incubus**  
With an absent-minded air --  
And I walked directly through him,  
As if he wasn't there!

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**Solomon:** A reference to the Bible; King Solomon is remembered for his wisdom

**Belabor** (verb): to argue or scorn someone harshly and excessively

**Obdurate** (adjective): stubborn

**Bunker Hill:** a reference to the Bunker Hill Monument which was built to commemorate Battle of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts during the Revolutionary War. The monument is a gigantic, towering, granite obelisk.

**Incubus** (noun): A male demon known for attacking women