

***The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton  
“Nothing Gold Can Stay” Poem Analysis  
& Bob Dylan Song Comparison Activity**

**Teacher’s Note**

Due to copyright, the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” and song “Forever Young” are not included in this product. You can easily access both texts by clicking the following links and then print them out for your students or have your students view them digitally.

[Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost](#)

[Forever Young Lyrics by Bob Dylan](#)

[Forever Young Song Video by Bob Dylan](#)

**Directions**

**Part 1:** Read and analyze the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost using the worksheet provided.

**Part 2:** Play the song “Forever Young” by Bob Dylan for your students.

**Part 3:** Students will answer the questions based on the lyrics to “Forever Young” by Bob Dylan as well as the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” on the worksheet provided.

**Part 4:** Summarizing strategy, Ticket-out-the-Door

Option A—This option will only work if your students are completing this activity directly after reading Chapter 5 of *The Outsiders*.

Option B—This option will work whether your students have finished reading the novel *The Outsiders*, or not.

Name:

Date:

**“Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost**  
**Poem Analysis**

1. What are two examples of alliteration in the poem?

2. What is this poem about?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?

4. What is the extended metaphor in this poem? What does it mean?

**PREVIEW**

5. What is the tone of the poem? How do you know?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

6. What imagery is used in this poem?

7. What personification is used in this poem? What does it mean?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

8. What allusion is used in this poem? What does it mean?

9. What is the theme of this poem (author’s message)?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

10. Do you agree with Robert Frost’s message? Explain.

Name:

Date:

**“Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost**  
**Poem Analysis**  
**ANSWERS**

1. What are two examples of alliteration in the poem?

Nature's first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

So dawn goes down to day.

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

The poem is about nature when it first blooms in spring. It's the greenest it will ever be, and it's a cherished and beautiful time. The beauty slowly fades and withers away as the seasons change and nature succumbs to its fate.

3. What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?

aa bb cc dd

# PREVIEW

4. What is the extended metaphor in this poem? What does it mean?

Frost starts the poem off with the metaphor “Nature's first green is gold.” This means the green (the beginning of spring) is pure, valuable, and uncorrupt (gold). He continues this metaphor that the springtime is gold throughout the poem saying that nature subsides slowly until the season is over and then all the goldenness is gone.

5. What is the tone of the poem? How do you know?

The tone is sad, appreciative, and thoughtful. The author's tone is filled with despair but acceptance. Words like grief, subsides, and sank connote feelings of sadness and words like gold and flower connote feelings of appreciation for nature.

6. What imagery is used in this poem?

# PREVIEW

Frost depicts a scene of nature using the words: green, flower, leaf, and dawn.

7. What personification is used in this poem? What does it mean?

“Her hardest hue to hold.” In this case, “her” refers to nature, meaning nature cannot hold onto the hue (color) of gold.

8. What allusion is used in this poem? What does it mean?

# PREVIEW

Frost uses a biblical reference: the Garden of Eden. In the Bible, the Garden of Eden is a perfect natural paradise until Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Frost is saying that just as Eden fell from purity to corruption, so will nature.

9. What is the theme of this poem (author's message)?

# PREVIEW

Frost is saying that nothing lasts forever. Nothing pure and innocent stays that way. Frost implies that youth is valuable and precious. Beauty, youth, and life itself is fleeting.

10. Do you agree with Robert Frost's message? Explain.

Answers will vary.

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Name:

Date:

**“Forever Young” by Bob Dylan &  
“Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost**

1. What emotions do you feel while listening to this song?

**PREVIEW**

2. What events in your life, if any, does this song make you think about? What lyrics stand out?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. Who is the intended audience for this song? Why do you think this?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. How would you classify the genre of this song?

5. What is the tone of this song?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

6. What is the meaning of the following metaphor?

“May you build a ladder to the stars,  
And climb on every rung.”

7. What is the meaning of the following line? “May your hands always be busy.”

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

8. What is the meaning of the following metaphor?

"May you have a strong foundation

When the winds of changes shift."

9. What is the message the artist is trying to convey in this song? What is the theme?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

10. Compare and contrast the themes from the poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay" and the song "Forever Young."

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

Name:

Date:

**"Forever Young" by Bob Dylan &  
"Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost**

1. What emotions do you feel while listening to this song?

Answers will vary.

2. What events in your life, if any, does this song make you think about? What lyrics stand out?

Answers will vary.

3. Who is the intended audience for this song? Why do you think this?

Answers will vary. Bob Dylan wrote this song for his son Jesse when he was born. Students might guess that this song was written for a child by a parent as many parents want only the best for their children and hope that their children stay youthful and innocent for as long as possible. The lines "May you grow up to be righteous" imply the audience is still young.

4. How would you classify the genre of this song?

Answers will vary. Rock or folk.

5. What is the tone of this song?

This song is hopeful, uplifting, sentimental, encouraging, and loving. This song is loving and sentimental because the singer is wishing a life full of love and happiness to the audience. It is hopeful, uplifting and encouraging because the singer hopes the audience follows his/her dreams, takes advantage of every opportunity given, and is kind to others with a full heart.

6. What is the meaning of the following metaphor?

"May you build a ladder to the stars,  
And climb on every rung."

The author is saying that you should work hard toward your dreams and never stop reaching until you get to the stars; make sure that you climb every rung along the way, and enjoy every experience on your journey.

7. What is the meaning of the following line? "May your hands always be busy."

When your hands are busy, you are enjoying life to the fullest. The Bible's proverbs 16:27 state "idle hands are the devil's workshop". When people have nothing to do, they are more likely to find trouble. If your hands are busy, you are working hard and have a full life. The author wants the intended audience to have purpose and be full of life. The message is: always have passion and goals, and never stop dreaming.

8. What is the meaning of the following metaphor?

"May you have a strong foundation  
When the winds of changes shift."

The metaphor is comparing someone's personal inner strength to that of a house. The author wants the intended audience to be tough and resilient like a building with a strong foundation. The winds are a reference to the inevitable hardships that people will face in life. The author hopes that the audience will be able to stand tall through the winds and storms of despair.

9. What is the message the artist is trying to convey in this song? What is the theme?

The author is saying we must live life as if we were young and full of dreams and opportunities, not literally that we should be forever young because it's impossible. Dylan sings about the importance of helping others as well as letting others help us. He hopes that his audience can be courageous, stand upright, and be strong no matter how old they are.

10. Compare and contrast the themes from the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” and the song “Forever Young.”

Both Dylan and Frost infer that a youthful mindset is valuable and important. Frost notes that it doesn't last long, but it's still a treasure. Dylan hopes that despite the inevitability of literally growing up, that the reader can stay forever young at heart by growing up to see the good in the world and choosing a righteous path. The themes differ because Frost's message feels like a sad one, and acts more as a warning to the reader that we should be aware of how quickly life passes by. Dylan's message is more of a prayer or plea that his audience will stay good and honest forever.

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

Name:

Date:

## Ticket-out-the-Door

1. Which poem/song do you like better? Why?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. Why do you think S. E. Hinton chose to have Ponyboy recite “Nothing Gold Can Stay” in the novel *The Outsiders*? How might it come up again later in the story?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

Name:

Date:

## Ticket-out-the-Door

1. Which poem/song do you like better? Why?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. What is something that is metaphorically gold in your life? How can *you* try to stay “forever young”?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**