The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might:
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright —

And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done —
“IT's very rude of him,” she said,
“To come and spoil the fun!”

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead —
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand:
“If this were only cleared away,”
They said, “it would be grand!”
“If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half a year.
Do you suppose,” the Walrus said,
“That they could get it clear?”
“I doubt it,” said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter\(^3\) tear.

“O Oysters, come and walk with us!”
The Walrus did beseech.
“A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny\(^5\) beach:
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each.”

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said:
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head —
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat —
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,
And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more —
All hopping through the frothy\(^6\) waves,
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low:
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

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3. **Bitter** (adjective): angry or hurt
4. **Beseech** (verb): to beg eagerly
5. salty
6. full of or covered with small bubbles
“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax —
Of cabbages — and kings —
And why the sea is boiling hot —
And whether pigs have wings.”

“But wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,
“Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!”
“No hurry!” said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“Is what we chiefly need:
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed —
Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.”

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
“After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do!”
“The night is fine,” the Walrus said.
“Do you admire the view?
It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very nice!”
The Carpenter said nothing but
“Cut us another slice:
I wish you were not quite so deaf —
I've had to ask you twice!”

“It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,
“To play them such a trick,
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!”

The Carpenter said nothing but
“The butter's spread too thick!”

7. above all
8. Dismal (adjective): showing or causing sadness; very bad or poor
"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize." 9
With sobs and tears he sorted out
[100] Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!
[105] Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none —
And this was scarcely10 odd, because
They'd eaten every one.

"The Walrus and the Carpenter" (1872) by Lewis Carroll is in the public domain.

9. **Sympathize** (verb): to feel sorry for someone
10. **hardly**
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement best expresses a theme of the poem?
   A. Trusting someone you don’t know can have dangerous consequences.
   B. Young people are often overwhelmed by what the world has to offer.
   C. Children should always listen to the advice of their parents.
   D. Sometimes bad people are not held responsible for their actions.

2. PART B: Which quote from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. “The eldest Oyster winked his eye, / And shook his heavy head / Meaning to say he did not choose / To leave the oyster-bed” (Lines 39-42)
   B. “The time has come,’ the Walrus said, / ’To talk of many things: / Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax’” (Lines 61-63)
   C. “Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear, / We can begin to feed.’ / ’But not on us!’ the Oysters cried,” (Lines 77-79)
   D. “’O Oysters,’ said the Carpenter, / ’You’ve had a pleasant run! / Shall we be trotting home again?’” (Lines 103-105)

3. PART A: How is the Walrus’ view about eating the Oysters different from the Carpenter’s?
   A. The Walrus is excited about eating the Oysters, while the Carpenter feels guilty.
   B. The Walrus feels bad about eating the Oysters, while the Carpenter doesn't care.
   C. The Walrus changes his mind about eating the Oysters but the Carpenter does not.
   D. The Walrus knows they need to eat the Oysters to survive but the Carpenter wishes they did not have to eat them.

4. PART B: Which TWO details from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
   A. “’Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear, / We can begin to feed’” (Lines 77-78)
   B. “’It was so kind of you to come! / And you are very nice!’” (Lines 85-86)
   C. “’I wish you were not quite so deaf — / I’ve had to ask you twice!’” (Lines 89-90)
   D. “’The Carpenter said nothing but / ’The butter’s spread too thick!’” (Lines 95-96)
   E. “’I weep for you,’ the Walrus said: / ’I deeply sympathize.’” (Lines 97-98)
   F. “’O Oysters,’ said the Carpenter, / ’You’ve had a pleasant run!’” (103-104)
5. How does the characterization of the Oysters contribute to the poem’s theme?
Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. The Carpenter and the Walrus appear to have different ideas about their actions. What is good and how do we know? Consider a time when you’ve been unsure of your actions or choices. How can we learn from these experiences?

2. In your experience, what does it mean to grow up? How are the Oysters influenced by their young age? Do you think they would have made the same decisions if they were older? Why or why not?

3. Why doesn’t the older oyster go with the walrus and carpenter? Do you think his age helps him understand the Walrus’ intentions and, if so, how?