

**THE TIMES THEY ARE A-
CHANGIN'**

Bob Dylan

BOB DYLAN(1941-)

- Folk rock singer, stage performer, song writer, film actor, painter and music director
- Won the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016 “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”
- Born Robert Allen Zimmerman
- Took the name Bob Dillon, which became Bob Dylan in a short time.
- Poetry was one that was initially influenced by Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Woody Guthrie
- Albums: The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan(1963)
The Times They are A-Changing(1964)
Highway 61 Revisited(1965)
Planet Waves(1975)
Modern Times(2006)
- Awards: Grammy, Academy, Golden Globe, Presidential Medal of Freedom(2012)



- He redefined poetry by making it more lyrical and contemporary as the Greek classical poets and the British romantic writers did.
- Often ignored and overlooked form of songs was given aesthetic respectability.
- His lyrics are so literary that he is often compared to great poets like Shakespeare, Blake, Rimbaud and Whitman.
- General theme of his poems- what happens around us at present, rather than the eternal philosophical musings.
- His songs were basically those of protest, written for ordinary people, white and black –expressing dissent of racism, bourgeois ways of life, negation of civil rights to all and warmongering.
- In 2008, the Pulitzer Prize jury awarded him a special citation for “his profound impact on popular music and American culture, marked by lyrical compositions of extraordinary poetic power.”

SUMMARY

STANZA 1:

Come gather 'round, people

Wherever you roam

And admit that the waters

Around you have grown

And accept it that soon

You'll be drenched to the bone

If your time to you is worth savin'

And you better start swimmin'

Or you'll sink like a stone

For the times they are a-changin'

- The opening line “Come gather 'round people” is typical language used in the folk traditions of telling villagers to gather around to announce new – and in this case ominous - things that are about to happen.”.
- Asking people to gather around together, to unite.
- People need to see the flaws of the government; what is happening with racism and poverty.
- Existing system needs a change. It is unjust.
- And now there is a change happening outside that stand up against the injustice.
- It is better you start swimming, so that things won't end up worse.
- During Civil Rights movement- black people- Afro-American.
- American civil rights movement, mass protest movement against racial segregation and discrimination in the southern United States that came to national prominence during the mid-1950s. This movement had its roots in the centuries-long efforts of enslaved Africans and their descendants to resist racial oppression and abolish the institution of slavery. { institutionalized racial discrimination, disenfranchisement and racial segregation in the United States }
- The first stanza perfectly sums up what the song is all about.
- As Dylan asks the people of the world to “admit that the waters around [them] have grown,” he means that change has arrived.
- Water has a cleansing power.
- He says that if people don't accept and embrace change, they'll drown in the past.
- This was released in 1964, At that time, the Civil Rights Movement was at its peak and anti-war sentiments in the midst of Cold War tensions were going strong.
- He is trying to show that with all this call for change, those who wish to maintain the culture of the past will eventually fall because the new movements are growing at a fast rate.

STANZA 2: Come writers and critics
 Who prophesize with your pen
 And keep your eyes wide
 The chance won't come again
 And don't speak too soon
 For the wheel's still in spin
 And there's no tellin' who
 That it's namin'
 For the loser now
 Will be later to win
 For the times they are a-changin'

- The folk atmosphere provides a simple rhythm that Dylan repeats in the second stanza, but he shifts his attention from everyday people to writers and journalists.
- He calls for those who prophesize with their pens to take careful note of change for when the times are changing, you never know what can happen.
- He tells them not to speak ill of them.
- The news has been talking badly about the times they are in and about the crisis.
- Since the “wheel’s still in spin,” meaning that a lot change is still happening, Dylan explains that “the loser now will be later to win” so this is the time for journalists and writers to watch the world with sharper eyes.
- This is a universal idea that applies to journalism, and we see it every day.
- Surprising events happen all the time and modern journalists should try their best to foresee them.
- Tells them not to speak too soon because everything is changing.

- STANZA 3: Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
The battle outside ragin'
Will soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

- Addresses the senators and congressmen.
- The third stanza focuses on politicians, who are tasked with answering to the will of the people.
- He asks them to listen to the call from those who want the change, and to act responsibly.
- As Dylan points out, unfortunately, many senators and congressmen and those involved in government affairs, only work in their own best interests.
- When the people demand change, Dylan points out that the congressmen cannot “stand in the doorway” or “block up the hall.”
- He urges them not to block those who fight for freedom.
- He shows that the stalling politicians will ultimately be the ones who lose in the end because the demand for change (the raging battle outside as Dylan puts it) near the doors of Capitol building will eventually overpower even the strongest of politicians.
- If the politicians block the people who want the change, they will be hurt badly, they’ll break your windows and shake your walls.

- STANZA 4: Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

- The last group of people that Dylan addresses consists of parents.
- In the fourth stanza, he reminds parents that the children are the future.
- Since times are changing, parents don't really have a say in criticizing what they don't understand.
- He says that parents should not attempt to send their children on the path of the dusty, aging old road for their lives are unpaved.
- It's the sons and daughters who must forge the new road, and if parents don't want to help, Dylan argues that they should "get out."
- This is Dylan's stance on cultural change.
- It's controversial due to the argument that parents want what's best for their children and sometimes their "best" is different from that of the children.
- He may be addressing the parents who hinder the decision making processes of their children really stand in the way of the future.
- Every child has dreams and aspirations, and every time that a parent stands directly in the way of a dream, the future grows less bright.

- STANZA 5: The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is rapidly fadin'
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'

- The fight has begun and the line is drawn by the youth.
- The curse of the past will be overthrown.
- Those who are fighting for the freedom and rights are now the minority, but they soon will be the ones ruling and making the change-as the present now will later be past.
- Jesus made the statement “many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matthew 19:30) in the context of His encounter with the rich young ruler.
- The last stanza shows the universal and perpetual nature of change.
- The established order is rapidly fading- it shows that there is a change taking place.