The entire poem is spoken by a single character, whose character and identity is revealed by his own words.

The lines are in blank verse , or unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Many of the lines are enjambed.

•Tennyson draws upon the figure of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* and the medieval hero of Dante's *Inferno* in creating the speaker of his poem "Ulysses.

•Homer's Ulysses learns from a prophecy that after killing the suitors of his wife Penelope, he shall embark on a final sea voyage.

•Dante's Ulysses finds himself restless in Ithaca and is driven by the desire to 'gain experience of the world'. Dante's Ulysses dies while sailing too far in an insatiable thirst for knowledge.

The poem also reflects the poet's personal journey, written a few weeks after he learned of the death of his dear friend Arthur Henry Hallam in 1833.

Ulysses, symbolizing the grieving poet, insists on his resolution to "strive, to seek, to find and not to yield ", in spite of his awareness that "death closes all".

The poem , thus can also be seen as Tennyson's expression of his need for continuing the journey of life, by going forward and braving the struggles of this journey, rather than sitting idle, drowned in grief.

The final line of the poem became a motto of sorts for Tennyson's Victorian contemporaries.

Longing to flee the tedium of daily life, the speaker desires to cross all limitations imposed by the physical world, sailing "beyond the sunset, and the baths of all the western stars".

A model of individual self-assertion and rebellion against conformity, Ulysses' figure stood as an important cultural icon , as well.

Major themes of Tennyson's poetry:

•An attempt to reconcile the differences emerging between scientific discoveries and religion of his time.

•Glorifying the virtues of perseverance, and characters who embrace their destinies , fearless of death.

•Glorifying England

•Lyrically mourning tragic deaths

•Finding inspiration in Greek and Roman mythological characters , to voice present concerns.