

Read Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" from lines 31-43 (from "She thanked men,— good! but thanked / Somehow—I know not how" to "E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose / Never to stoop").

1. Consider the definition of *trifling*. To what "trifling" (line 35) is the Duke referring?
2. How does the Duke describe his response to the Duchess's "trifling" (line 35)?
3. What does it mean to *stoop*? What does the word mean in this context?
4. What does the word *stoop* suggest about how the Duke views the Duchess?
5. What does the Duke say about his own speaking ability?
6. What does the language of the poem suggest about the Duke's speaking ability? What specific details and examples illustrate his speaking ability?
7. What inference can be made about the Duke based on what he says about his speaking ability?

8. To whom does the Duke refer as “such an one” in line 37?

9. What is the meaning of the word *will* on line 36?

10. What is the Duke’s will? How does this contribute to the Duke’s development as a character?

11. What is the meaning of *lessoned* as Browning uses it in line 40?

12. Paraphrase lines 35–43 (from “Even had you skill / In speech” to “and I choose / Never to stoop”).

13. How do specific words or phrases in the Duke’s statement, “I choose / Never to stoop” (lines 42–43) impact the meaning or tone of the text?

14. How does the repetition of *stoop* contribute to the Duke’s development as a character?