The Seven Ages of Man Study Questions

1. Look back over the poem and write down the seven roles that Shakespeare says each of us will play in life. All you need to write for this question is a list of the seven ages/acts of a man’s life.

2. What simile does Shakespeare use to describe the schoolboy? Does this comparison still fit children today? Does it fit you?

3. When describing the soldier, Shakespeare describes reputation as a “bubble.” What’s his message to the reader here?

4. According to the poem, what’s the most noticeable way that elderly people begin to resemble small children? Write the line from the poem that supports your answer.

5. Some people would argue that there are not just seven ages that we pass through in our lives, but that we also play several roles within each day, altering ourselves depending on our company. What roles do you find yourself playing? When are you truly your full self?

6. Shakespeare most likely wrote these lines in 1599. Do his seven ages still apply to people today? If so, what does this show us about humanity? If not, what new or different stages do you think would better reflect the life path of people today?