

English

(Honeysuckle) (Chapter – 8) (The Banyan Tree)
(Class – VI)

Working with the Text

Question A:

Complete the following sentences.

1. The old banyan tree “did not belong” to grandfather, but only to the boy, because————
—————
2. The small grey squirrel became friendly when —————
—————
3. When the boy started to bring him pieces of cake and biscuit, the squirrel —————
—————
4. In the spring, the banyan tree —————, and————— would come there.
5. The banyan tree served the boy as a —————
—————
6. The young boy spent his afternoons in the tree —————
—————

Answer A:

1. The old banyan tree “did not belong” to grandfather, but only to the boy, because *the grandfather was sixty-five years old and could no longer climb on it.*
2. The small grey squirrel became friendly when *he found out that the boy did not arm himself with a catapult or air gun.*
3. When the boy started to bring him pieces of cake and biscuit, the squirrel *grew quite bold and soon started taking morsels from the author’s hand.*
4. In the spring, the banyan tree *was full of small red figs*, and *all kinds of birds* would come there.
5. The banyan tree served the boy as a *library where he had made a rough platform to sit and read books.*
6. The young boy spent his afternoons in the tree *when it was too hot.*

Question B:

1. “It was to be a battle of champions.”

(i) What qualities did the two champions have? Pick out words and phrases from the paragraph above this line in the text and write them down.

Mongoose

Cobra

(a) _____

(a) _____

(b) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(c) _____

- (ii) What did the cobra and the mongoose do, to show their readiness for the fight?

2. Who were the other two spectators? What did they do? (Did they watch, or did they join in the fight?)

3. Read the descriptions below of what the snake did and what the mongoose did. Arrange their actions in the proper order.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (i) ceased to struggle | • grabbed the snake by the snout |
| (ii) tried to mesmerise the mongoose | • dragged the snake into the bushes |
| (iii) coiled itself around the mongoose | • darted away and bit the cobra on the back |
| (iv) struck the crow | • pretended to attack the cobra on one side |
| (v) struck again and missed | • refused to look into the snake's eyes |
| (vi) struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | • sprang aside, jumped in and bit |

4. (i) What happened to the crow in the end?

(ii) What did the myna do finally?

Answer B:

1.

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (i) | Mongoose | Cobra |
| | (a) A superb fighter | (a) Skilful and experienced fighter |
| | (b) Clever | (b) Swift |
| | (c) Aggressive | (c) Poisonous |

(ii) To show its readiness for the fight, the cobra hissed defiance, his forked tongue darting in and out. It raised three feet of its six feet off the ground, and spread his broad, spectacled hood. The mongoose bushed his tail. The long hair on his spine stood up.

2. The other two spectators were a myna and a jungle crow. They saw the preparations of the battle and had settled on the cactus to watch the outcome. They tried to join the fight by hurling themselves at the cobra.

3.

- | SNAKE | MONGOOSE |
|---|---|
| (ii) tried to mesmerise the mongoose | • refused to look into the snake's eyes |
| (vi) struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | • pretended to attack the cobra on one side |
| (v) struck again and missed | • sprang aside, jumped in and bit |
| (iv) struck the crow | • darted away and bit the cobra on the back |
| (iii) coiled itself around the mongoose | • grabbed the snake by the snout |
| (i) ceased to struggle | • dragged the snake into the bushes |

4.

(i) In the end the crow flung nearly twenty feet across the garden by a blow from the cobra's snout. It fluttered about a while, then lay still.

(ii) Myna finally dropped cautiously to the ground, hopped about, peered into the bushes from a safe distance and then with a shrill cry of congratulations flew away.

Working with Language

Question A:

1. The word 'round' usually means a kind of shape. What is its meaning in the story?
2. Find five words in the following paragraph, which are generally associated with trees. But here, they have been used differently.
Underline the words.

Hari leaves for work at nine every morning. He works in the local branch of the firm of which his uncle is the owner. Hari's success is really the fruit of his own labour. He is happy, but he has a small problem. The root cause of his problem is a stray dog near his office. The dog welcomes Hari with a loud bark every day.

Answer A:

1. The word 'round' in the story means the different phases of the fight between the cobra and the mongoose.
2. Leaves, branch, roots, bark and fruits.

Hari leaves for work at nine every morning. He works in the local branch of the firm of which his uncle is the owner. Hari's success is really the fruit of his own labour. He is happy, but he has a small problem. The root cause of his problem is a stray dog near his office. The dog welcomes Hari with a loud bark every day.

Question B:

The words in the box are all words that describe movement. Use them to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

dived gliding sprang darting whipped...back delving
--

1. When he began to trust me, the squirrel began ————— into my pockets for morsels of cake.
2. I saw a cobra ————— out of a clump of cactus.
3. The snake hissed, his forked tongue ————— in and out.
4. When the cobra tried to bite it, the mongoose ————— aside.
5. The snake ————— his head ————— to strike at the crow.
6. The birds ————— at the snake.

Answer B:

1. When he began to trust me, the squirrel began *delving* into my pockets for morsels of cake.
2. I saw a cobra *gliding* out of a clump of cactus.
3. The snake hissed, his forked tongue *darting* in and out.
4. When the cobra tried to bite it, the mongoose *sprang* aside.
5. The snake *whipped* his head *back* to strike at the crow.
6. The birds *dived* at the snake.

Question C:

Find words in the story, which show things striking violently against each other.

1. The cobra struck the crow, his snout th — — — ing against its body.
2. The crow and the myna c — ll — — — in mid-air.
3. The birds dived at the snake, but b — — — d into each other instead.

Answer C:

1. The cobra struck the crow, his snout *thudding* against its body.
2. The crow and the myna *collided* in mid-air.
3. The birds dived at the snake, but *bumped* into each other instead.

Question D:

Look at these sentences.

- In the spring, birds of all kinds *would* flock into the banyan tree's branches.
- I *would* spend the afternoons there.
- Grandfather, at sixty-five, *could* no longer climb the banyan tree.
- I *could* hide myself in its branches.
- I *could* look down through the leaves at the world below.
- I *could* read there.

'Would' tells us what the author *used to do*, or what *used to happen*. 'Could' tells us what the author was *usually able to do*, or grandfather is *now not able to do*.

Choose *would* and *could* to replace the italicised words in the following sentences.

Grandfather says, in the old days,

1. elephants *were able to fly* in the sky, like clouds. They *were also able to* change their shapes. They *used to* fly behind clouds and frighten them. People *used to* look up at the sky in wonder.
2. because there was no electricity, he *used to* get up with the sun, and he *used to* go to bed with the sun, like the birds.
3. like the owl, he *was able to* see quite well in the dark. He *was able to* tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps.

Answer D:

1. Elephants *could* fly in the sky, like clouds. They *could* change their shapes. They *would* fly behind clouds and frighten them. People *would* look up at the sky in wonder.
2. Because there was no electricity, he *would* get up with the sun, and he *would* go to bed with the sun, like the birds.
3. Like the owl, he *could* see quite well in the dark. He *could* tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps.

Speaking

Question:

Look at these sentences.

- The tree was older than Grandfather.
- Grandfather was sixty-five years old.

How old was the tree? Can you guess?

- The tree was as old as Dehra Dun itself.

Suppose Dehra Dun is 300 years old. How old is the tree?

When two things are the same in some way, we use *as...as*.

Here is another set of examples.

- Mr Sinha is 160 centimetres tall.
- Mr Gupta is 180 centimetres tall.
- Mrs Gupta is 160 centimetres tall

Mrs Gupta is *as tall as* Mr Sinha.

Use the words in the box to speak about the people and the things below, using *as...as* or *-er than*

tall – taller cold – colder hot – hotter
strong – stronger short – shorter

(Notice that in the word 'hot', the letter 't' is doubled when -er is added.)

1. Heights



Zeba (155cm)



Ruby (150cm)



Rani (155cm)

2. Weight Lifters



Vijay (50kg)



Akshay (50kg)



Anwar (65kg)

3. City Temperatures



Shimla (6°)



Gangtok (6°)



Srinagar (2°)

4. Lengths



Romi's pencil
(3 inches long)



Mona's pencil
(5 inches long)



Raja's pencil
(3 inches long)

5. City Temperatures



Delhi (43°)



Chennai (39°)



Nagpur (43°)

Answer:

1.
 - Zeba is as tall as Rani.
 - Zeba is taller than Ruby.
 - Rani is taller than Ruby. Ruby is shorter than Zeba as well as Rani.
2. Most of the fruit have plenty of sugar, but some citrus fruit are low in sugar.
 - Anwer is stronger than Vijay as well as Akshay.
 - Vijay is as strong as Akshay.
 - Neither Vijay nor Akshay is as strong as Anwer.
3. Most of the soft drink except this one have lots of 'empty calories'.
 - Shimla is as cold as Gangtok.
 - Shimla is not colder than Srinagar.
 - Shimla or Gangtok are not as cold as Srinagar.
4. Most of the films are romances, but a few are on other topics.
 - Romi's pencil is as long as Raja's pencil.
 - Mona's pencil is longer than that of Romi or Raja.
5. Most of the people agree that he is a good leader, but a few disagree.
 - Delhi is hotter than Chennai.
 - Delhi is as hot as Nagpur.
 - Chennai is not hotter than Delhi or Nagpur.

Writing

'My Favourite Place'

Read again the paragraphs of the story in which the author describes the banyan tree, and what he used to do there. Is there a place in your house, or in your grandparents' or uncles' or aunts' houses, that you specially like? Write a short paragraph about it, saying

- where it is
- what you do there
- why you like it

You may instead write about a place you dislike, or are afraid of.

Answer:

My favourite place in my house is balcony. I use to sit here to enjoy the sunshine on winter days and cool breeze on summer mornings. I use to sit here to do my studies as well as homework also because it is an isolated, open and quiet place.