

2.1 Cherry tree

Ice Breaker

- **Trees are revered because :**

Ans. (1) They give us joy.

(2) They give us food, medicines, wood, besides many other useful things.

(3) They provide shade and shelter to many birds and animals.

(4) They absorb toxic carbon dioxide and make the air clean.

(5) They prevent soil-erosion and help rain cloud formation.

(2) Column A shows your involvement in growing a tree, as well as the stages in the life of a tree. Column B shows the feelings you experience at all the stages. Match them appropriately: (Answer are given directly)

Ans.

A	B (Ans)
1. You planted a sapling-	1. You wanted to make a humble beginning.
2. You watered the plant-	2. You cared for it.
3. You saw the shoot for the first time-	3. The new experience brought excitement to you.
4. You fenced the plant-	4. Your motive was to protect it.
5. The plant gradually had lush green leaves grow on it -	5. The colour, symbolizing life, gave you a feeling of hope.
6. The tree had buds too -	6. Gave you a feeling of joy to see the promising future.
7. Birds made a nest on the tree which was fully grown and laden with flowers.	7. You were happy and satisfied because you experienced what op you had often heard, that small beginnings can lead to great achievements.

BRAINSTORMING

(A1) (1) Find proof from the poem for the following.

(a) The poet has mentioned different seasons.

Ans. a. The line "And suddenly that summer near the end of May," mentions the summer season.

- b. The line "Split it apart and a monsoon blight" mentions the monsoon season.
- c. The line "Next spring I watched three new shoots grow," mentions the spring.
- d. The line "Who watched, wandering, while Time and the rain" mentions the monsoon season.

(b) The poet's minute observations of the steady growth of the cherry tree.

Ans. a. The poet saw that the 'cherry tree had grown six feet high'.

b. The poet was surprised to find 'a berry hanging from one of the tree's branches, ripened and shining like a jewel'.

c. The following year, the poet notices 'small pink-coloured blossoms on the tree, that was fragile and looked like they easily fall'.

d. He observed how the cherry tree was benefitting the finches with its leaves, the bees with the nectar from its flowers, and providing a resting place to the moon-moths and the crickets at night and praised it.

It can thus be proved that the poet made minute observations of the steady growth of the tree.

(c) The colour imagery in the poem.

Ans. a. The poet refers to the cherry tree as 'dark'.

b. He describes the blossoms as 'pink'.

c. The sky has been described as 'blue'.

d. The use of the words 'dappled green' to describe the leaves of the cherry tree. The use of different colours to describe the different elements in the extract proves that the poet has used colour imagery in the poem.

(d) The struggle of the cherry tree for survival.

Ans. The pink blossoms that grew on the cherry tree were fragile and seemed like they would fall at the lightest breath or the slightest breeze. However, the blossoms don't fall off. In fact, they even provide nectar to the bees. This instance proves the struggle of the cherry tree for survival.

(ii) State whether the following statements are True or False. Correct the false statements by finding evidence from the poem to support your remark.

(a) The cherry tree did not take long to grow.

Ans. False.

Explanation: The cherry tree took a long time to grow eight years in all.

(b) Birds and insects were benefitted from the tree.

Ans. True

(c) The poet was exalted at the sight of the cherry tree.

Ans. True

(d) The poem has an underlying message about the importance of trees.

Ans. True

(e) The poet repents planting the cherry tree.

Ans. False.

Explanation: The poet feels richer in seeing the cherry tree that he planted and praises it.

(A2) (i) Discuss in groups, reasons/consequences/effects:

(a) The life of the cherry tree was threatened.

Ans. The poet forgot about the seed he had put in the ground. No one looked after it/ watered it. The cattle ate the fresh leaves of the little plant. The grass cutter did not notice it, and chopped it when cutting the grass. The sapling was nearly destroyed but it struggled and survived with the help of the life-giving sunlight and rains.

(b) The cherry blossomed.

Ans. The cherry tree had grown and reached a stage when it bore flowers. This showed it in spite of nearly dying how it was a healthy fully grown cherry tree.

(ii) A small thought, put in action, led to a great achievement. Pick out the lines from the beginning and end of the poem and explain their significance.

Ans. Opening lines... Since I placed my cherry seed in the grass. "Must have a tree of my own," I said...

The desire to have his own tree prompted the poet to plant a cherry seed and water it, though later he forgot all about it.

That seed sprouted, struggled and grew, thrived and blossomed till it was six feet tall. It blossomed and yielded fruit too.

(A3) The cherry tree has inspired the poet to compose the poem. Such poems, describing Nature or aspects of Nature are called 'Nature poems'. Find out some expressions from the poem that bring out the elements of beauty of Nature.

Ans. Some expressions from the poem that bring out the elements of the beauty of Nature are as follows:

- i. "...in the grass"**
- ii. "... that summer near the end of May"**
- iii. "I found a tree..."**
- iv. "...tall grass running wild"**
- v. "...ate the leaves..."**
- vi. "...slender stem..."**
- vii. "...light and air and sun"**
- viii. "...and the rain..."**
- ix. "...richer by a cherry tree..."**
- x. "...my own dark cherry..."**
- xi. "...-a berry."**
- xii. "Ripened and jeweled in the sun,"**
- xiii. "...blossoms small..."**
- xiv. "Pink, fragile, quick to fall"**
- xv. "...sleepiest breeze"**
- xvi. "...on the grass..."**
- xvii. "...through the leaves at the blue Blind sky and the finches as they flew"**
- xviii. "...dappled green..."**
- xix. "...bees in an ecstasy drank..."**
- xx. "Of nectar from each bloom and the sun sank"**
- xxi. "Swiftly, and the stars turned in the sky,"**

xxii. "...moon-moths and singing crickets..."

xxiii. "...Night and Stars and tree:"

xxiv. "That small, the cherry..."

(A4) (1) Read the line.

Pink, fragile, quick to fall

Notice the arrangement of the words in the line:

They move from healthy to delicate

This figure of speech is called Climax where successive words, phrases, sentences are arranged in ascending order of importance. Here, the cherry blossom turns pink, ripens and is ready to be picked.

Ans. Students have to do this activity by yourself.

(ii) Find out examples from the poem.

Alliteration

Ans. 1. "Spent a season in Kashmir"

2. "Came back thinner, rather poor, But richer by a cherry tree at my door."

3. "And I could scarcely believe it-a a berry."

Antithesis

Ans. "It was very small, five months child, Lost in the tall grass running wild."

Personification

Ans. 1. "Pink, fragile, quick to fall At the merest breath, the sleepest breeze..."

2. "And moon-moths and singing crickets and I Yes, I! - praised Night and Stars and tree:"

(A5) (i) 'Cherry Tree' is a narrative poem. Features that make it a narrative poem are given below. Justify them with proper examples.

(a) The poem has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Ans. The poem begins with the poet recalling how he planted the seed and forgot about it.

He then narrates how the plant struggled through the perils and survived. He watched it grow from a little sapling to a six feet tree bearing beautiful blossoms and even a jewel like fruit.

He returns to the present day when he is relaxing under the branches of the full grown tree, admiring the creatures living on and off his cherry tree.

(b) Different places are mentioned.

Ans. The poet speaks of going away from that place to Kashmir and returning. At the end of the poem the poet describes his surroundings while he lies under the cherry tree.

(c) Characters are referred to.

Ans. There is reference to a grass-cutter. Several creatures - goat, birds and insects are mentioned.

(d) Incidents are arranged in a sequence.

Ans. In the first stanza it is mentioned that the little green cherry plant was small - a five months child, and later it has three shoots growing upward. Finally it is a full grown tree with blossoms and fruit.

Summer, monsoon, next spring are mentioned in seasonal order. A boy wanted his own cherry-tree, he sowed the seed and forgot about it. He then is older and is away from home. He may be earning a living. So the life of a boy growing up into a young man.

(e) There is a dialogue between the poet and the reader or the characters of the poem.

Ans. The poet is telling the reader an incident about planting a seed, its subsequent development and miraculous survival, and lastly, the way he succeeded in having his own cherry-tree. He speaks the line in stanza 1. "Must have a tree of my own."

(f) It is a time-bound poem.

Ans. The poem begins with a recollection of how it was a seed, proceeds with the plants struggle to survive, its growth, and the final success. The poet feels proud when he lies under his own tree admiring it as part of beautiful Nature around him, which he loves.

(ii) Compose 8 to 10 lines. Narrate any incident in your life without using any rhyming pattern.

Ans. As I walked down the school-lane, I remembered the coin
My grandfather gave me to buy a toffee or a top from
My favourite corner shop. The pocket of my shorts was torn and I
Sadly found out only after losing my treasure. But another day my

Friend, who had won my Cat's eye, lost it back to me! I was thrilled
To be the master of marble-games again.
He begged me
For the Cat's eye and offered a coin in exchange. I didn't know
If I wanted the Cat's eye or a top more!

(iii) Write an appreciation of the poem considering the following points:

- **About the poem, poet and title.**
- **Theme/summary/gist of the poem.**
- **Poetic style/language, poetic devices used in the poem.**
- **Special features/novelties/focusing elements.**
- **Message/values/morals in the poem.**
- **Your opinion about the poem.**

Ans. The title 'Cherry Tree' indicates that the poem is connected to nature. Ruskin Bond is a nature lover and he describes the relationship with the tree over several years. As a boy the poet had casually buried a cherry seed. Later he is thrilled to find it as a fully haly grown cherry tree. He eagerly watches it grow and personifies the plant as one would describe a child. The rhyme scheme is aa, bb, cc and so on. Sight and sound imagery, and alliteration make the poem enjoyable. There are run-on lines which also make it interesting.

The poem gives the message to love nature and how easily we can nurture greenery and benefit from it. It shows how a small effort can bring such enjoyable results. The little plant struggles and survives even after being nearly destroyed. So we understand we must persevere. We must be patient, work hard, and then the fruits will arrive at the apt time.

(iv) Write a summary of the poem using the following points:

- **Title**
- **Introductory paragraph (about the poem, type, Nature, tone)**
- **Main body (central idea, gist of the poem) Conclusion (opinion, views, appeal)**

Ans. The title tells the subject of the poem, which is narrative. The poet remembers burying a cherry-seed with the intention of having his own cherry tree. Though he forgot about this, some months later he finds a little cherry plant growing. From then on he watches it closely. Once he finds it nearly cut away,

while another time almost dead with a disease. Yet some months afterwards he sees it is grown several feet. Thus eight years later the poet is relaxing under a full grown cherry tree which has birds perched, bees humming around and some fruits growing on it. The poet tells a simple story about his own cherry tree.

(A6) (1) Write the poem 'Cherry Tree' in the form of story.

Ans. Cherry Tree

Eight years ago I put a cherry seed among some grass in the garden and watered it. I wanted a cherry tree of my own! But then I forgot all about it. Yet the seed had taken root and I noticed at the end of that summer that there was actually a cherry plant growing.

It grew among the tall grass and so was unnoticed. The goats ate up its leaves while grazing there. The grass cutter too did not take care when trimming the grass and the stem of the cherry sapling was damaged. In the rains the poor plant was infected with a fungus. Yet, in the following spring, there were three new shoots making their way upward toward the warm sun

Now that I knew that the plant was growing, I was impatient. But I had to wait. I also travelled away from home. I went to Kashmir for a season. When I came back I was thrilled to see not a plant but a cherry tree in the garden! It was six feet tall, and, amazingly, had a single, ruby-red little cherry hanging from a branch! The next year there were beautiful cherry-blossoms, which were a delicate pale pink. They were so frail that if I went too close, my breath, or even a gentle puff of breeze would blow them off the tree!

Later, lying under the tree on the grass, I watched the finches darting among the leaves of the cherry tree. The sun was quickly setting and the sky was darkening, stars appearing as bees hovered over the flowers for the nectar. Crickets chirped and the night-moths appeared as I admired the beautiful starry night, and my very own cherry tree.

(ii) Write in 100 words what the cherry tree in the poem symbolises.

Ans. The cherry tree could be a symbol of a slow tentative beginning of a dream or ambition. It is begun with hope, perhaps forgotten afterwards. The dreamer may despair and even give it up. But a little effort, some nurturing and determination will make the idea slowly take shape. Confidence returns and hope rises. With care, effort and time the dream become real. The person will use up all the resources and toil till the small idea is successful and gives results. Thus one can (metaphorically) taste the sweet fruits after a long time and hard work.

(iii) You have studied the lesson 'The Call of the Soil' from prose 1.3. Compare 'Cherry Tree' with 'The Call of the Soil' and find out the element of joy of nurturing for the author and the poet.

Ans. The author's feelings which he describes in 'The Call of the Soil' are very

similar to the feelings of the poet of 'Cherry Tree'. Venkat Iyer recalls his thrill when looking around his fields of moong, which were yet to ripen. He describes his search to break free of growing modern, hybrid which are a chemical-dependant, water-intense variety of short-term rice. He later succeeded in finding a traditional variety of rice seeds to grow a sturdy, long-term crop. The locals had given up this rice instead of short-term hybrid varieties. He was happy about his life-change from techie to farmer.

Ruskin Bond recalls how he, probably as a boy, wanted his own cherry tree and planted a seed. In spite of neglect the little seed sprouted and grew shoots and leaves. The sapling escaped the grazing cattle and careless grass-cutter, to flourish with the help of Nature. The poet, when older, was overjoyed to see a full grown tree near his door, with fragrant blooms, actually bearing fruit.

Both the narrators find joy in having created something living. They watch the growing life anxiously and are happy to grow the crop/tree.

(A7) Project

Visit the library and collect at least five poems of any Nature poet. Write the poems along with their summary.

Ans. (Student Do it your own)