

## 8. Pangong Tso

Environment greatly influences our quality of life. A clean environment refreshes our surroundings. Trees, plants, lakes and other water bodies purify our environment. Lakes replenish ground water and are an important source of recreation and tourism. They also serve as an important habitat for birds and fish. Ask the children to learn the names of at least eight lakes of J&K in their mother tongue.

Hoor has recently arrived with her father from a vacation in Ladakh. Her friends, Nadeem and Fatima, have come to see her at home. The children are talking in the garden while Hoor's father is busy with the flowerbeds. He is within hearing distance.

Hoor: Do you remember the movie 3 Idiots?

Fatima: Yes.



Nadeem: Aal iij well!

Hoor: In the last scene there is a lake. Yes or no?

Nadeem: Yes.

Fatima: It's beautiful – big with long, sandy shores. It changes its colour from Green to blue and vice versa. I would love to go there.

Hoor: We went there. It's the Ping-Pong Lake in Ladakh.

Nadeem  
*laughs*]: Ping-Pong! That means table tennis.

Hoor [*to her father*]: Papa! See what Nadeem is saying.

Hoor's father  
[*approaching*]: I heard him. He's right.

Fatima: Uncle, what's the 3 Idiots lake called then?

Hoor's father: It is called the Pangong Lake.

Fatima: Pangong! What name is that?

Hoor's father: It means a very long curve.

- Hoor: Nobody in the whole school has seen the lake.  
Nadeem: It must be like the Dal Lake.  
Hoor: It's different. It's clean, green, blue and many other colours.  
Hoor's father: Hoor is very excited after having seen the Pangong Lake. I'll tell you about it. It is situated 160 kms away from Leh and the journey is very exciting.
- Fatima: There must be monasteries. I've read there are many monasteries in Ladakh.  
Hoor's father: Yes, Fatima. I'll tell you about the lake first, okay?  
Hoor: That's great.  
Nadeem: Is it as big as the Dal?  
Hoor's father: No, it's much bigger, over 130 kms long and 6 - 7 kms wide. That makes it about 700 sq kms.  
Fatima: Dal Lake is only 11 sq kms!  
Hoor's father: And Pangong has saline water.  
Nadeem: Aren't there any fish then?  
Hoor's father: Only some crustaceans. There are many ducks and gulls. During summer many migratory birds like the Bar-headed goose, the Brahmini ducks and the black-headed Siberian crane are seen. Wildlife including the Kiang and Marmot are also found around the lake.
- Hoor: Papa! You told me that Pangong freezes during winter, didn't you?  
Hoor's father: Yes.  
Fatima: But it is saline water.



- Hoor's father: Yes. Not only is Pangong the world's highest brackish lake, but it also freezes completely in winter. The temperature drops down to - 30°C.
- Fatima: That must be very cold. Why is it so?  
Hoor's father: Ladakh is a high-altitude place. Pangong is 14256 feet above sea level while Kashmir is 6000 feet above sea level.
- Nadeem: Where does its water come from?  
Hoor's father: You know, part of Pangong is in China. That's why civilians are allowed to go only 7 kms from the lake's head in Ladakh. From the Indian side the lake is fed by two streams. Above the lake is the beautiful mountain range called the Pangong Range, on which there are a number of glaciers. These streams have formed marshes and wet lands around the lake.

- Hoor: Papa, where does the lake's water go?
- Hoor's father: Pangong is actually a basin of inland drainage. In the past it had an outlet into a tributary of Indus River but that was closed by natural damming. Recently the lake has also shrunk.
- Fatima: Are there any people living around Pangong?
- Hoor's father: I told you people are allowed to go only 7 kms along the shore of the lake. At that point is a village called Spangmik. There are a few more villages with little population around Pangong. From Spangmik, the Changchemo mountain range can be seen and also its reflection in the lake's waters.
- Fatima: How do these people live there in winter?
- Hoor's father: They live there only in summer. In winter they leave with their flocks of sheep and pashmina goats to distant pastures. There they live in tents called *rebo*.
- Nadeem: That means they are nomads.
- Hoor's father: Yes. And they are called Chang-pa.
- Fatima: What do these people eat in summer?
- Hoor's father: They cultivate barley and peas, only sufficient for themselves.
- Fatima: Do these people cause pollution to their lake?
- Hoor's father: No. Pangong is a very clean lake with placid waters. It is being identified as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- Hoor: What does that mean?
- Hoor's father: It means that Pangong will be looked after by an international organization. They will make sure it is not polluted and will also conserve it. Children, it is time for your studies now.
- Nadeem: When will you tell us about the journey to Pangong?
- Hoor's father: The next time we meet, for sure.

### New Words

excited, monastery, saline, crustacean, gull, Bar-headed goose, Brahmini ducks, Kiang, Marmot, brackish, marsh, basin, tributary, damming, pasture, placid, wetland, conserve

### Glossary

- excited: thrilled
- monastery: a building in which monks and nuns live and worship
- saline: salty
- crustacean: a water animal with a hard shell
- gull: a bird with black and white or gray and white feathers
- Bar headed goose: a migratory bird that breeds in Central Asia
- Brahmini duck: a member of the duck/goose family
- Kiang: a wild ass
- Marmot: a kind of squirrel

brackish:	salty
marsh:	wetland
basin:	area from which streams flow into a river or lake
tributary:	river/stream that flows into a larger river/lake
damming:	to build a dam
pasture:	meadow
placid:	calm
wetland:	marshy land
conserve:	preserve

**Thinking about the Text****A. Answer these questions:**

1. What does 'Pangong' mean and where is it situated?

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2. Describe the Pangong lake?

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3. Which migratory birds and animals are found in the Pangong in summer?

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4. Why are civilians allowed to go only 7 kms along the shore of the Pangong?

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5. Name the village/s situated around the lake.

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6. What does Ramsar Convention mean?

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### Language Work

#### Framing Questions to fit Answers

Sometimes we are asked to frame questions to fit answers. For instance, look at the following:

1. I met Muneer in the morning.  
When did you meet Muneer?
2. The children are playing cricket.  
What are the children playing?

In the above Questions and Answers, we can gather the nature of questions from the underlined word/s.

#### EXERCISE

Write Questions to which the following Answers may fit. The questions you frame should be related to the underlined word/s.

1. Somebody has turned off the TV.
2. We normally get up at 5 a.m.
3. There are hundred students in our class.
4. The boys were playing football.
5. The beggar is asking for money.
6. My school is only 1km from my home.
7. Her mother is a doctor.
8. I am buying novels for my sister.
9. We go every summer to some hill station.
10. She goes to her office by her car.

### Grammar Work

#### Future Simple Tense

Look at the following sentences:

1. I shall meet him tomorrow.

2. He will come here next Sunday.

The above sentences express some action which will take place or happen at some time in future.

Thus, the Future Simple Tense is used to show or express an action which will happen or take place at a certain time in future and 'shall/will + the First Form of the Verb' is used with all the Subjects. However, with the First Person Pronouns (I & We), we prefer to use 'Shall' instead of 'Will'.

**Contracted or Short forms:**

1. will not = won't
2. shall not = shan't
3. will/shall = 'll

**EXERCISE**

Use the correct Tense form (Simple Future Tense) in the following sentences:

1. She \_\_\_\_\_ me on Monday. (meet)
2. She \_\_\_\_\_ my invitation. (accept, not)
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ this work tonight. (finish)
4. When \_\_\_\_\_ your doctor? (you see)
5. I may finish early. Then I \_\_\_\_\_ to the library. (go)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ to work on the weekend? (agree)
7. Tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_ Monday. (be)
8. Who \_\_\_\_\_ you to complete the task? (help)
9. She \_\_\_\_\_ a doctor when she grows up. (be)
10. I \_\_\_\_\_ the doctor tomorrow. (consult)

**Let's Talk**

Have a class discussion on the topic: 'Importance of Water Bodies'.

**Let's Write**

Write a few sentences on any local lake you have visited.

### **Teacher's Page (Pangong Pso)**

1. Ask the students about any local lake.
2. Tell them scientifically how a lake comes into existence and then start the lesson.
3. Ask the children to learn the names of lakes and rivers of J&K in their mother-tongue.
4. Let them discuss in groups what can be done to save the lakes.
5. Ask them to write a brief paragraph on any water body they know of.



## This Land of Ours

The bulbul chirps to the blossoms:  
A flower-garden is this land of ours,  
This land of ours is a flower-garden,  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.

Sunny summits girdle it around –  
Fair walls of shining marble –  
In the midst is this gem, so green;  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.

In the vales of mountain ranges  
Spring has chosen a seat to rest.  
Tulips bloom in gardens like Shalimar –  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.

Springs, rivers and streams,  
Rivulets and roaring waterfalls,  
Are thrilled with the joy of spring.  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.

Around roses the bulbul turns in love  
And the bumblebee seeks the narcissus –  
Kashmiris feel drunk in excitement.  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.

Mahjoor, this homeland of ours  
Is a charming garden, indeed;  
Let us shower our love on it.  
A flower-garden is this land of ours.



Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor

(Translated from the Kashmiri by Prof G.R. Malik)

### New Words

bulbul, chirp, blossom, summit, girdle, bloom, rivulet, roaring, thrilled, bumblebee, narcissus

### Glossary

bulbul:	a bird
chirp:	(especially of a bird) to make a short high sound
blossom:	a small flower on a tree or plant
summit:	the highest point of a mountain
girdle:	surround



bloom:	grow
rivulet:	a very small stream
roaring:	making loud and deep sound
thrilled:	extremely pleased
bumblebee:	a large hairy bee
narcissus:	a fragrant white and yellow flower, similar to a daffodil

**Reading is Fun**

1. What does the bulbul say to the blossoms in the first and second stanza?

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2. How is the valley described in the third stanza?

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3. How does the poet describe the happy mood of the rivers and waterfalls?

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4. What is the poet's wish in the end?

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**Language Work**

- A. Pick out the adjectives used in the poem.
- B. Write the antonyms of the given words from the poem.

(One is done as an example)

<u>fair</u>	<u>ugly</u>
<u>shining</u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>bloom</u>	<u>                    </u>

_____thrilled_____	_____
_____joy_____	_____

**Let's Talk**

How do gardens, mountains, rivers, streams and waterfalls make a place beautiful? Share your ideas with the class.

**Let's Write**

Make a list of things that we should do to preserve the beauty of J&K.

### **Teacher's Page (This Land of Ours)**

1. The teacher may refer to the various picnic spots of Kashmir like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Nishat, Shalimar, etc., that children are familiar with.
2. Then the students might be asked about the scenic beauty and surroundings of these picnic spots.
3. The students can then share their feelings regarding the natural beauty of J&K.
4. Ask the children to learn and sing two vernacular songs.