

A Tiger in the Zoo

'This poem contrasts a tiger in the zoo with the tiger in its natural habitat. The poem moves from the zoo to the jungle, and back again to the zoo. The poem provides a contrast in the mood and environment of a tiger when he is in the zoo and a tiger when he is in the forest. In the zoo, he has no freedom. He is kept in a cemented cell behind the bars. He feels angry, frustrated and helpless. This reminds him of his natural habitat, his hiding and sliding in the long grass near the water hole and pouncing upon the fat deer, the way he terrorised the villagers, displaying his sharp teeth and claws.

At night in the zoo he hears the sounds of patrolling cars. The tiger in the zoo appears helpless as to be a mere showpiece and source of entertainment to people. The poet wants to convey that it is cruel to keep wild animals in small enclosures of the zoo, away from their natural habitat. They feel angry, helpless and unhappy in the cage. He pays no attention to the visitors who came to watch him. In the silence of the night, he stares at the brilliant stars with his bright eyes.

NCERT Solutions

Thinking About the Poem (Page 30)

Question 1.

Read the poem again and work in pairs or groups to do the following tasks.

1. Find the words that describe the movements and actions of the tiger in the cage and in the wild. Arrange them in two columns.
2. Find the words that describe the two places and arrange them in two columns.

Now try to share ideas about how the poet uses words and images to contrast the two situations.

Answer1:

In the Cage	In the Wild
Stalks, Few steps of his cage, Quiet rage Locked in concrete cell, Stalking-the length of his cage Ignoring visitors. He hears the last voice Stares at the brilliant stars.	Lurking in shadow, Sliding through long grass, Snarling around houses, Baring his white fangs, his claws, Terrorising the village.

Answer 2:

Cage	Wild
Few steps of his cage,	Shadow, Long grass, Water
Locked, Concrete cell,	hole, Plump deer,
Behind bars, Visitors,	Houses at jungle's edge,
Patrolling cars	Village

Question 2.

Notice the use of a word repeated in lines such as these

1. On pads of velvet quiet, In his quiet rage.
2. And stares with his brilliant eyes At the brilliant stars.

What do you think is the effect of this repetition?

Answer:

This repetition is a poetic device used by the poet in order to increase the intensity of the tiger's rage and his helpless silence. 'Velvet quiet' refers to the quiet velvet pads of the tiger, which cannot run or leap. They can only walk around the limited space in the cage. The use of 'quiet rage' symbolises the anger and ferocity that is building up inside the tiger as it wants to run out into the forest and attack a deer, but the rage is quiet because he is locked in the cage and is helpless. The repetition of 'quiet' has, thus, brought immense beauty to the poem. Similarly, the use of 'brilliant' for the tiger's eyes as well as the stars also brings out the magnificence of these lines. The tiger stares at the brilliant stars with his brilliant eyes dreaming about how beautiful his life could be in the forest. The repetition thus, gives a wonderful effect to the poem.

Question 3.

Read the following two poems one about a tiger and the other about a panther. Then discuss:

Are zoos necessary for the protection or conservation of some species of animals?

Are they useful for educating the public?

Are there alternatives to zoos?

The Tiger

The tiger behind the bars of his cage growls,
 The tiger behind the bars of his cage snarls,
 The tiger behind the bars of his cage roars,
 Then he thinks.

It would be nice not to be behind bars all

The time

Because they spoil my view
I wish I were wild, not on show.
But if I were wild, hunters might shoot me,
But if I were wild, food might poison me,
But if I were wild, water might drown me.
Then he stops thinking
And...
The tiger behind the bars of his cage growls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage snarls,
The tiger behind the bars of his cage roars.

– Peter Niblett

The Panther

His vision, from the constantly passing bars,
has grown so weary that it cannot hold
anything else. It seems to him there are
a thousand bars; and behind the bars, no world.
As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,
the movement of his powerful soft strides
is like a ritual dance around a centre
in which a mighty will stands paralysed.
Only at times, the curtain of the pupils
lifts, quietly. An image enters in,
rushes down through the tensed, arrested muscles,
plunges into the heart and is gone.

– Rainer Maria Rilke

Answer:

Several species of animals are on the verge of extinction. Even tigers and lions are not safe in the forest due to poaching that is done for trade, etc. Zoos are, thus, necessary for the protection or conservation of these species. Zoos are safe and can also be used to educate the public about the importance of wild animals and their role in maintaining the ecological balance. Wildlife sanctuaries, reserves and national parks are some alternatives to zoos. These not only help in the protection and conservation of these species, but also provide them with a natural habitat

Extra Questions

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

How does the tiger feel in the zoo?

Answer:

The poet describes the feelings of the tiger in the zoo. He keeps on moving from one corner to another. "He stalks in his vivid stripes moving the few steps of his cage". He is not happy. He expresses his silent anger.

Question 2.

How does the tiger walk in the cage?

Answer:

In the cage, the tiger walks stately and furiously.

Question 3.

What message do you get from this poem?

Answer:

From this poem, we come to know that animals like to live freely in the forest. The animals do not want to live in the zoo. Their life is pitiable in it.

Question 4.

How does the tiger act in the cage?

Answer:

The tiger is in the cage. He is powerless and helpless. He longs for freedom. His velvet pads do not make ' any noise. He is in the silent anger roaring and ignoring the visitors.

Question 5.

What would the tiger do in a forest?

Answer:

In the forest, the tiger can enjoy complete freedom. He would walk around freely without any fear. He would terrorize the villagers by growling. He would show his teeth and claws.

Question 6.

What does the poet want to convey through this poem?

Answer:

The poet wants to convey that like human beings, animals also like freedom. They do not want to be caged, they cannot live a miserable life. If their habitat is destroyed by human beings, these animals cannot survive.

Question 7.

What would the tiger do in a forest?

Answer:

In the forest, the tiger can enjoy complete freedom. He would walk around freely without any fear. He would terrorize the villagers by growling. He would show his teeth and claws.

Question 8.

"Freedom is a birth right. It is the most beautiful gift of god. It is valuable for all human beings as well as for creatures," Discuss with reference to the poem "A Tiger in the Zoo."

Answer:

Freedom is the most beautiful gift of god. Freedom is a birthright, without freedom all is in vain. Since the man has come on his earth, he tries to enslave the weaker sections for his own selfishness. If a bird lives in a golden cage, it cannot become happy. It loves to fly freely in an open sky. In the same way, if ' a man lives in a prison and gets everything, he cannot feel happiness. But if a man lives freely, he will be happy even in poor conditions. In this poem, we find the descriptions of two tigers, one is in a cage and second in an open field/forest. There is a great contrast between their behaviours.

Question 9.

Tigers are becoming extinct due to deforestation and poaching. How can people be sensitized about the need of tiger.

Answer: Tigers are considered as an endangered species. People are killing tigers for their skins, bones, claws and teeth. Due to this, the population of tigers has declined. We should not encroach on their habitat. As we all need sheltered home, tigers also need natural surroundings. Forests should not be cut down. They (Tigers) must be given more space to move freely around.

Question 10.

'Freedom' is a life for both humans and animals. Elaborate.

Answer:

The poet describes the feelings of the tiger in the zoo. He keeps on moving from one corner to another. "He stalks in his vivid stripes moving the few steps of his cage". He is not happy. He expresses his silent anger.

Question 11.

Those who deny freedom to others, do not deserve it for themselves. Comment.

Answer:

The poet describes the feelings of the tiger in the zoo. He keeps on moving from one corner to another. "He stalks in his vivid stripes moving the few steps of his cage". He is not happy. He expresses his silent anger.

Question 12.

Read the poem again, and work in pairs or groups to do the following tasks.

(i) Find the words that describe the movements and actions of the tiger in the cage and in the wild.

Arrange them in two columns.

(ii) Find the words that describe the two places, and arrange them in two columns.

Now try to share ideas about how the poet uses words and images to contrast the two situations

Answer:

Movements and actions of Tiger in the cages		Movements and actions of the Tiger in the wild	
Stalking	His movement in the cage is restricting and he is unhappy at the places in the cage.	Lurking	His movement in the wild is liberating and he is happy prowling in his natural surroundings.
Ignoring			
Sliding			
Snarling			
Baring			
Storing		Terrorising	
Hearing			

Places in the Cage**Places in the wild**

Pads of velvet quiet

shadow

Concrete cell

grass

behind bars

water hole jungle's edge

Question 13.

Notice the use of a word repeated in lines such as these —

(i) On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.

(ii) And stares with his brilliant eyes
At the brilliant stars.

What do you think is the effect of this repetition?

Answer:

(i) The word 'quiet' has been repeated in these lines. The repetition of the words expresses the intensity of the Tiger' action.

(ii) 'Brilliant' word has been repeated in these lines. It expresses both the anger and brightness in the eyes of the tiger. It creates an effect of intensity of the action.

Question 14.

Read the following two poems—one about a tiger and other about a panther.

Then discuss:

Are zoos necessary for protection or conservation of some species of animals? Are they useful for educating the public? Are there alternatives to zoos?

See Textbook Pages 30-31

Answer:

The zoo is necessary place for some animals to stay safe as they could be hunted down, poisoned by sotne wild food; or could drown in water in the forest. They also create awareness among the public about the nature of animals and make people friendly with animals. However, a zoo is not the correct substitute for a forest. In a zoo, an animal would feel restricted' and it is for this reason that wildlife sanctuaries are better places for national endangered species.

These places provide protection as well as natural surroundings to these species. They can roam around freely in their habitat and safe too. The public can visit these parks and get educated about the animals and their lifestyle. The parks and sanctuaries are run using a strict set of rules, the most prominent being the ban on hunting. Since the animals are in the open, visitors are not allowed to feed them and would not misbehave or try to play with them as they are under strict guidance. Such incidents have been recorded in zoos where people irritate and tease the animals. Hence, a wild life

sanctuary is a good alternative for animals to be safe as well as to live freely in their natural surroundings.

Question 15.

Take a point of view for or against zoos or even consider both points of view and write a couple of paragraphs or speak about this topic for a couple of minutes in class.

Answer:

Zoos are both necessary and unnecessary for many reasons. But the reasons in favour are more than its opposite idea. That is why the number of zoos is increasing throughout the world. Day by day the number of many species is decreasing rapidly. So zoos are very necessary to protect and conserve them. Many species of wild animals have already become extinct. Animals too are important for this earth. There are many reasons to say that there are no alternatives of zoos.

Reference to Context

Read the Stanza and answer the questions that follow:

Question 1.

*He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.*

- (i) Name the poem and poet.
- (ii) Who does 'He' refer to? Where is he kept?
- (iii) Where is 'He'? Is he happy there?
- (iv) Pick out the word from the extract that means the same as—'bright'.

Answer:

- (i) These lines have been taken from the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo' composed by Leslie (ii) Norris. 'He' refers to the Tiger. He is kept in a cage.
- (iii) He is in the cage in the zoo. No, the tiger is not happy in the zoo.
- (iv) 'vivid'.

Question 2.

*He should be lurking in shadow
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass.*

- (i) Who does 'He' refer to?
- (ii) Where is the tiger at present?
- (iii) Give a word opposite in meaning from these lines to 'light'.
- (iv) Pick out the word from the extract that means the same as—"wait in hiding".

Answer:

- (i) 'He' refers to the tiger.
- (ii) Tiger is in its natural habitat at present.

- (iii) Shadow
- (iv) 'Lurk'.

Question 3.

*He should be snarling around houses
At the jungle's edge,
Baring his white fangs, his claws,
Terrorising the village!*

- (i) Who is 'he' in the stanza?
- (ii) Why does he move around the houses?
- (iii) How should he be terrorising the village?
- (iv) Give noun form of 'terrorise'.

Answer:

- (i) 'He' in the stanza stands for the tiger.
- (ii) He moves around the houses in search of his prey.
- (iii) He should be terrorising the village people with baring of his white fangs and with his claws.
- (iv) Terror

Question 4.

*But he's locked in a concrete cell,
His strength behind bars,
Stalking the length of his cage,
Ignoring visitors.*

- (i) Where is he locked?
- (ii) Where is he striding.
- (iii) Whom does he ignore?
- (iv) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as – "Walk stiffly".

Answer:

- (i) He is locked in a concrete cell behind the bars.
- (ii) He is striding in his concrete cell.
- (iii) He ignores the visitors.
- (iv) "Stalk".

Question 5.

*He hears the last voice at night,
The patrolling cars,
And stares with his brilliant eyes
At the brilliant stars.*

- (i) Who does "he" refer to?
- (ii) What does 'Tie' do at night?
- (iii) What are the cars doing?
- (iv) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as—'gleaming'.

Answer:

- (i) 'He' refers to the tiger.
- (ii) The tiger watches the stars at night.

(iii) The cars are patrolling the area

(iv) 'brilliant'