

How to Tell Wild Animals

It is a humorous poem. The poet suggests some dangerous ways of identifying wild animals. The suggested ways create humour. He says if you ever visit the jungles in the east and you happen to encounter a lion, a tiger or a leopard, you'll be able to identify them by the way they attack you. Identifying while dying, the idea makes you laugh.

He also tells you to identify a bear from its friendly, hard bear-hug, a hyena from its laugh and a crocodile from its weeping while swallowing its victim. If you see nothing on the tree then there is a Chameleon as it has the quality to change its colour according to its surroundings.

NCERT Solutions

Thinking about the Poem (Page 45)

Question 1.

Does 'Dyin' really rhyme with 'lion' ? Can you say it in such a way that it does?

Answer:

No, 'Dyin' does not rhyme with 'lion'. If we change the pronunciation of lion by speaking it as 'lying' then it may rhyme with the word 'dyin'.

Question 2.

How does the poet suggest that you identify the lion and the tiger? When can you do so according to him?

Answer:

A lion is a large and tawny beast. A Bengal Tiger has black stripes on its yellow coat. A lion roars when it falls upon its prey, while a tiger attacks silently. We can identify the two while roaming in the jungle.

Question 3.

Do you think the words 'lept' and 'lep' in the third stanza are spelt correctly? Why does the poet spell them like this?

Answer:

The words 'lept' and 'lep' are not spelt correctly. The poet has spelt them like this in order to maintain the rhythm of the poem. The correct spelling of the words, 'lept' is leapt and 'lep' is leap. The poet has intentionally spelt them incorrectly to create a sense of humour.

Question 4.

Do you know what a 'bearhug' is? It's a friendly and strong hug-such as bears are thought to give, as they attack you! Again, hyenas are thought to laugh and crocodiles to weep ('crocodile tears') as they swallow their victims. Are there similar expressions and popular ideas about wild animals in your own language (s)?

Answer:

A bearhug is when the bear hugs his prey tightly with both hands and presses him to death.

There are indeed similar expressions and popular ideas about wild animals in every language. For example, in Hindi, we say 'Magarmach ke aansu aaana' (Crocodile tears) 'Haathi ke daant dikhane ke aur, khane ke aur', 'Ab pachtaye hot kya jab chidiya chug gai khet', 'Girgit ke tarah rang badalna'.

Question 5.

Look at the line 'A novice might nonplus.' How would you write this 'correctly'? Why is the poet's 'incorrect' line better in the poem?

Answer:

The line "A novice might nonplus" can be written correctly as "A novice might be nonplussed". However, the poet's incorrect line is better in the poem as it maintains the rhyme scheme of the poem. By writing it incorrectly, 'nonplus' rhymes with 'thus'.

Question 6.

Can you find other examples of poets taking liberties with language, either in English or in your own language? Can you find examples of humorous poems in your own language (s)?

Answer:

One can find plenty of examples in poetry where poets take liberties with language. This is called 'poetic licence'. Poets take such liberties in order to create proper rhyming and rhythm. For example, in the following lines the word 'prest' is used instead of 'pressed' so that it may rhyme with 'breast'.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweat flowing breast

Question 7.

Much of the humour in the poem arises from the way language is used. Although the ideas are funny as well. If there are particular lines in the poem that you especially like, share these lines with the class, speaking briefly about what it is about the ideas or the language that you like or find funny.

Answer:

The way the poet has used language and ideas in the poem is indeed humorous. The lines from the poem that appears to be funny are "A noble wild beast greets you". The idea that a wild beast is going to welcome you is quite funny. The language in the line, "He'll only lep and lep again" is also very humorous. The concept of 'lep' from the word 'leopard' generates humour

Extra Questions

Question 1.

How can you identify the Asian Lion?

Answer:

The poet in the humorous way says that if a person goes to the jungles in the east and if a large and brownish wild animal roars while killing him, the dying man can know that it is the Asian Lion.

Question 2.

How can you identify the Bengal Tiger?

Answer:

A person can identify the Bengal Tiger when a beast with black stripes on yellow body meets and eats him. This is how he can make out that it is the Bengal Tiger.

Question 3.

How can a man know that the beast is leopard?

OR

Describe some features of the leopard.

Answer:

Leopard has spots on its body. It is a dangerous and powerful animal. It has the quality of leaping again and again. It leaps over its prey at once. It eats its prey.

Question 4.

How does the poet tell us to identify a bear?

Answer:

The poet says that if, while walking round the courtyard of his house, a person meets there a creature who hugs him very, very hard, then he can be sure that it is a bear.

Question 5.

How does the poet distinguish the hyena from crocodile?

Answer:

The poet tells us how to distinguish a hyena from crocodile. A hyena is an animal who can laugh. The poet says that if a creature greets a person while smiling merrily, then that creature is hyena. If a creature sheds tears while swallowing a person, then it is a crocodile.

Question 6.

What does the poet tell us about a chameleon?

Answer:

The poet tells us that a chameleon is found on a tree. It is a creature which can change its colour according to its surrounding. It is very difficult to see a chameleon on the tree because it changes its colour according to the colour of the tree.

Question 7.

The poet has used some special qualities to describe the animals and create humour in the poem. Each of us also has some special qualities which make us quite different from others. Do you agree with this statement? Comment with reference to the poem 'How to Tell Wild Animals'.

Answer:

The poet has used the selected words and expressions to describe the animals and to create humour. For example she says, "A noble beast greets you" for "The Bengal Tiger", "A bear – hugs you" "Crocodiles weep" and 'Hyena smiles'. Like these animals, each of us has some special qualities which make us quite different from others. For example, we face many people in a day, but even then we can easily recognize them only through their voice or through their special habits. These distinctive qualities give them a unique identification. This, statement is absolutely right.

Question 8.

The poet uses humour in a perfect manner in her poem—'How to Tell Wild Animals' to bring smile on the face of readers. In our daily life also humour is the best medicine for every ailment. Do you agree? Comment.

OR

"Humour is the perfect medicine for all diseases". Discuss this statement by taking examples from the poem "How to Tell Wild Animals".

Answer:

The poet talks about wild animals in a funny manner. All the dangerous, wild animals like lions, tigers,

leopards, bears, hyenas, crocodile, chameleon have been portrayed humorously. The poet describes their dangerous activities in such a manner that they produce laughter.

Question 9.

Does 'dyin' really rhyme with 'lion'? Can you say it in such a way that it does?

Answer:

No 'dying does not rhyme with 'lion'. It is for this reason that the poet has used 'dyin' so that when we pronounce it, it rhymes with 'lion'.

Question 10.

How does the poet suggest that you identify the lion and the tiger? When can you do so, according to him?

Answer:

The poet suggests that if a large and tawny beast comes towards us, then it is an Asian lion. We can identify it when it roars at us while, we are dying with fear. When while roaming, we come across a wild beast that is yellow in colour with black stripes, it is Bengal tiger. We can identify it when it eats us.

Question 11.

Do you think the words 'lept' and 'lep' in the third stanza are spelt correctly? Why does the poet spell them like this?

Answer:

No, the words 'lept' and 'lep' are spelt incorrectly. The poet has spelled them like this in order to maintain the rhythm of the poem. When spelled this way, they rhyme with the first part of 'leopard', thus giving emphasis to 'leopard' in each line.

Question 12.

Do you know what a 'bearhug' is? It's a friendly and strong hug—such as bears are thought to give, as they attack you! Again, hyenas are thought to laugh, and crocodiles to weep ('crocodile tears') as they swallow their victims. Are there similar expressions and popular ideas about wild animals in your own language(s) ;

Answer:

A 'bearhug' is the bear's tight embrace. Hyenas never laugh. But their faces look like that. Crocodiles do not weep but tears come when they swallow their victims.

Question 13.

Look at the line "A novice might nonplus". How would you write this 'correctly'? Why is the poet's 'incorrect' line better in the poem?

Answer:

The line "Novice might nonplus" can be correctly written as "A novice might be nonplussed". The poet's incorrect line is better in the poem as it maintains the rhyme scheme of the poem. By writing it incorrectly, 'nonplus' rhymes with "Thus".

Question 14.

Can you find other examples of poets taking liberties with language, either in English or in your own language (s)? Can you, find examples of humorous poems in your own languages(s)?

Answer:

Yes, many poets take such liberties to create proper rhyming. These are for example – Kirk has ‘Church’ to rhyme with ‘work’. Ken has used “See” to rhyme with ‘pen’.

Question 15.

Much of the humour in the poem arises from the way language is used, although the ideas are funny as well. If there are particular lines in the poem that you especially like, share these with the class, speaking briefly about what it is about the ideas or the language that you like or find funny.

Answer:

Students must try to do it at their own level. From this poem the following lines may be pointed out where language and ideas arise humour in the poem.

If he roars at you as you’re dyin’

A noble wild beast greets you,

Just notice if he eats you.

“Twill do not good to roar with pain,

Who hugs you very, very hard,

A novice might nonplus,

Hyenas come with merry smiles A true Chameleon is small,

In all these lines, the ideas are treated humorously. They are wild beasts. They can neither laugh, smile nor be gentle. They will kill the human beings at once as they get, the chance.

Reference to Context

Read the stanza and answer the questions that follow:

Question 1.

If ever you should go by chance

TO jungles in the east;

And if there should to you advance

A large and tawny beast,

If he roars at you as you’re dyin’

You’ll know it is the Asian Lion...

- (i) Name the poem and the poet.
- (ii) How does one identify the Asian Lion?
- (iii) How does an Asian Lion react on seeing a man?
- (iv) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as “All of a sudden”.

Answer:

(i) This stanza has been taken from the poem “How to Tell Wild Animals” composed by Carolyn Wells.

(ii) The Asian Lion is identified by its size, colour and roar, it is a large tawny beast.

(iii) When Asian Lion sees a man, it roars and takes no time in killing him.

(iv) ‘by Chance’.

Question 2.

Or if sometime when roaming round,

A noble wild beast greets you,

With black stripes on a yellow ground,

*Just notice if he eats you.
This simple rule may help you learn
The Bengal Tiger to discern.*

- (i) Who is the 'noble wild beast' here?
- (ii) How does this beast look?
- (iii) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as 'to recognise'.
- (iv) Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) The noble wild beast is Bengal Tiger here.
- (ii) This beast looks like it is coloured with black stripes on a yellow ground.
- (iii) 'discern'.
- (iv) 'How to Tell Wild Animals' written by Carolyn Wells.

Question 3.

*If strolling forth, a beast you view,
Whose hide with spots is peppered,
As soon as he has lept on you,
You'll know it is the Leopard.
Twill do no good to roar with pain,
He'll only lep and lep again.*

- (i) How can you recognise the Leopard?
- (ii) How is it different from the Bengal Tiger?
- (iii) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as—'a large animal of the cat family'
- (iv) Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) The leopard can be recognised by its spots on the skin.
- (ii) Bengal Tiger has black stripes on a yellow ground while the Leopard has round black spots on the body.
- (iii) 'Leopard'.
- (iv) 'How to Tell Wild Animals' and poem composed by Carolyn Wells.

Question 4.

*If when you're walking round your yard
You meet a creature there,
Who hugs you very, very hard,
Be sure it is a Bear.
If you have any doubts, I guess
He'll give you just one more caress.*

- (i) Whom can you meet in the yard?
- (ii) How can one recognise that he is meeting a bear?
- (iii) Pick out the word from the stanza that means the same as—'loving touch' or 'gentle touch'.
- (iv) How does it treat the Man?

or

Name the poem and poet.

Answer:

- (i) In your yard, you can meet a bear.

- (ii) One can recognise that he is meeting a bear by its hard hug.
- (iii) "caress".
- (iv) When a bear meets a man, it hugs him very hard.