

UNIT I GLIMPSSES OF GREEN

‘Nature is not a place to visit. It’s home.’ Discuss.

Nature is really a resemblance of heaven. It is for all living beings. Man should live in harmony with nature. But we go to tourist places of natural beauty and destroy the places by littering. We should keep these places neat and tidy as if they are our homes.

Being one with nature is always mesmerizing. Have you ever got a chance to spend your leisure time with nature? Let’s read how a boy experienced and blended with the essence of nature.

ADVENTURES IN A BANYAN TREE

Ruskin Bond

Glossary

- harmony - agreement, peace
- mesmerizing - hypnotising (മോഹ നിദ്രയിൽ ആഴ്ത്തുക)
- leisure - free time
- blended - mixed together inseparably
- essence - extracted qualities (സത്ത)
- domain - place ruled by one king
- magnificent - splendid
- tease - to make angry with funny remarks
- maze - net work
- nestle - to settle
- sniff - to draw up air in an angry manner. (മണം പിടിക്കുക)
- resent - to feel angry
- invasion - encroachment (കടന്നുകയറ്റം)
- catapult - (തെറ്റാലി)
- delve - to search thoroughly (വിശദമായി പരിശോധിക്കുക)
- headstrong - self willed (താനേന്നി)
- spring - season in which vegetation begins
- figs - (അത്തിപ്പഴം)
- flock - gather together
- gossip - an idle talk
- rosy pastors - (ഒരുതരം പക്ഷി)
- squabbling - quarrelling
- prop - support
- bole - trunk of the tree
- vendor - seller
- grumble - murmur (പിറുപിറുക്കുക)
- excitement - being filled with feelings

- mongoose - (കീരി)
- approaching - coming near
- drowsy - feeling sleepy
- gliding - passing gently
- clump - cluster or group of trees.
- cactus - (കള്ളിമുൾച്ചെടി)
- emerge - to come up
- superb - of very high quality
- aggressive - inclined to attack (ആക്രമണ സ്വഭാവമുള്ള)
- sac - വിഷസഞ്ചി
- fang - snake’s venom tooth (വിഷപ്പല്ല)
- venom - poison
- defiance - challenge to fight (പോർവിളി)
- dart - sudden rapid motion (വേഗത്തിൽ ചലിപ്പിക്കുക)
- bush (v) bring to the shape of a bush (കുറ്റിക്കൊടുപോലെയാക്കുക) (നടകുടയുക)
- spine - back bone
- fatal - deadly (മാരകം)
- combatants - fighters (പോരാളികൾ)
- spectators - on-lookers
- wily - crafty, tricky.
- outcome - result.
- content - satisfied, pleased (സംതൃപ്തം)
- defensive - self protective (സ്വയം പ്രതിരോധിക്കുക)
- sway - (ആടുക)
- opponent - (എതിരാളി)
- unwinking - (ഇമയ്ക്കാത്ത)
- gaze - (നോട്ടം)
- feint - sham attack (ഒന്നിനെ ലക്ഷ്യം വച്ച് മറ്റൊന്നിനെ അക്രമിക്കുന്ന സമ്പ്രദായം, വഞ്ചന)
- hurl - to throw violently - (ചുഴറ്റി എറിയുക)
- collide - (കൂട്ടിയിടിക്കുക)
- shriek - sharp cry
- glisten - to shine brightly (വെട്ടിത്തിളങ്ങുക)
- sprang - jumped
- bump - to strike heavily (പ്രഹരിക്കുക)
- determined - having taken a strong decision (തീരുമാനിച്ചുറച്ച)
- proceedings - (നടപടിക്രമം)
- perch - (ചേക്കേറുന്ന സ്ഥലം)
- whipped - attacked (ആക്രമിച്ചു)
- snout - the long nose of an animal (മൃഗത്തിന്റെ മൂക്ക്)

thud - (താഴെ വീഴുന്ന ശബ്ദം)
 flutter - flap the wings (ചിറകടിക്കുക)
 fray - fight (വഴക്ക്)
 refrained - held back (മാറിനിന്നു)
 interfere - to come in the way (ഇടയ്ക്കു കയറുക)
 writhe - to twist the body in pain (പുളയുക)
 coiled - (ചുരുങ്ങുകുടി)
 grimly - horribly (ഭയങ്കരമായി)
 quivering - trembling (വിറച്ചി)
 grip - hold (പിടിക്കുക)
 drag - (വലിച്ചിഴക്കുക)
 cautiously - ((ശ്രദ്ധയോടെ)
 hopped - jumped
 peered - looked
 scrap - (അടിപിടി)
 tame - (ഇണങ്ങുക)
 domesticated - (മെരുക്കിയ)
 patrol - go round (റോന്റ് ചുറ്റുക) (കാവൽ നടപ്പ്)
 poultry - (വളർത്തു പക്ഷികൾ)
 forgive - (ക്ഷമിക്കുക)
 anna - അണ (ഇന്ത്യയിലെ പഴയ നാണയം)
 excursions - (ഉല്ലാസയാത്ര)
 straw - dry grass (ഉണക്കപ്പുല്ല്, വൈക്കോൽ)
 knitting - (തുന്നിയ വസ്തു)
 glint - shine
 crammed - packed നിറച്ചിരുന്നു
 offspring - (സന്താനം)

Write the summary of the story ‘The Adventures in a Banyan Tree’.

‘The Adventures in a Banyan Tree’ is a beautiful short story. It is written by Ruskin Bond, an Indian author of British origin. In this story we see a single banyan tree creating much beauty and harmony. The author tells that we should preserve nature to make this world a beautiful place.

When the author was a boy, he used to enjoy his vacations at his grandfather’s house in Dehradun. It was at the foot of the Himalayas. There was an old, magnificent banyan tree in the garden. He used to spend most of his leisure time in that tree. His Grandfather was very old. So he could not climb the tree. Thus the tree became the boy’s domain.

In the tree the boy be-friended a young grey squirrel. He didn’t harm it. So it became friendly with

him. It used to take food from his hands. In the spring when the banyan tree was full of fruits, it was the noisiest place. Birds of all kinds would flock into it. Half way up the tree the boy had built a platform for sitting. There he used to read books and watch the surroundings.

On a sunny afternoon he was sitting in the tree. He witnessed a deadly fight between a small mongoose and a huge cobra. Both of them were clever and skilful fighters. They were aggressive too. Besides the boy, a myna and a crow were also witnessing the fight. They interfered in the fight. The crow was killed by the snake. But the myna escaped. At the end of the fight the mongoose won and the cobra was killed.

The banyan tree was also the setting for a strange affair between a grey squirrel and a white rat. The white rat was bought from the market by grandfather. One day the boy discovered three white baby squirrels in a nest in the banyan tree. Grandfather told the boy that the white rat must be the father.

ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് വംശജനായ ഇന്ത്യൻ എഴുത്തുകാരൻ റസ്കിൻ ബോണ്ട് എഴുതിയ ഒരു ചെറുകഥയാണ്. ‘Adventures in a Banyan Tree’. കഥാകൃത്ത് ചെറുപ്പം ആയിരുന്നപ്പോൾ തന്റെ അവധിക്കാലം ചിലവഴിക്കുവാൻ ഹിമാലയത്തിന്റെ താഴ്വരയിൽ ദെഹ്രാഡൂണിൽ ഉള്ള മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ പോകുമായിരുന്നു. അവിടെയുള്ള ഒരു ആൽ മരത്തിൽ ആയിരുന്നു അവൻ കൂടുതൽ സമയം ചിലവഴിച്ചിരുന്നത്. മുത്തച്ഛൻ പ്രായം ആയതിനാൽ അതിൽ കയറുവാൻ കഴിയില്ലായിരുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടു ആൽമരം അവന്റെ അധികാരത്തിൻ കീഴിൽ വന്നു. ആ മരത്തിൽ ഒരു അണ്ണാനുമായി അവൻ ചങ്ങാത്തത്തിൽ ആയി. അവൻ അതിനെ ഉപദ്രവിക്കില്ല എന്നു അതിന് ഉറപ്പായിരുന്നു. വസന്ത കാലത്ത്, മരത്തിൽ മുഴുവൻ പഴങ്ങൾ നിറയുമ്പോൾ ആ ആൽമരമായിരുന്നു ആ നാട്ടിലെ ഏറ്റവും ശബ്ദമുഖരിതമായ സ്ഥലം. എല്ലാതരത്തിലും ഉള്ള പക്ഷികൾ അതിലേക്ക് എത്തുമായിരുന്നു. മരത്തിന്റെ പാതി ഉയരത്തിൽ അവൻ ഒരു ഇരിപ്പിടം തയ്യാറാക്കിയിരുന്നു. അവിടെ അവൻ വായനയിൽ സമയം ചിലവഴിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഒരുദിവസം ആ മരത്തിൽ ഇരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഒരു കീരിയും മുർഖനും തമ്മിൽ ഉള്ള ഒരു ശക്തമായ യുദ്ധം കാണുവാൻ ഇടയായി. രണ്ടുപേരും നല്ല പോരാളികൾ ആയിരുന്നു. ഒരു മൈനയും കാക്കയും ആ വഴക്കിന്റെ കാഴ്ചക്കാർ ആയിരുന്നു. അവസാനം കീരി യുദ്ധം വിജയിച്ചു. പിന്നീട് ആ മരത്തിൽ താമസിച്ചിരുന്ന ചാരനിറം ഉള്ള ഒരു അണ്ണാനും ചന്തയിൽ നിന്ന് മുത്തച്ഛൻ കൊണ്ടുവന്ന ഒരു വെളുത്ത എലിയും സുഹൃത്തുക്കൾ ആയി. ഒരു ദിവസം അവൻ നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ മരത്തിലെ കൂട്ടിൽ കണ്ടത് ചാരനിറം ഉള്ള അണ്ണാൻ ഉണ്ടായ വെളുത്ത കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളായിരുന്നു. മുത്തച്ഛൻ പറഞ്ഞു “വെളുത്ത എലിയായിരിക്കും അവയുടെ അച്ഛൻ”.

Questions and Answers

1. “..... house and grounds were of Grandfather’s domain. But the magnificent old banyan tree was mine.” Why did the boy say so?

(The boy said so because grandfather was very old. He was not able to climb on the old banyan tree. Thus the tree became the boy’s domain.)

2. How did the squirrel become a friend of the boy?

(The squirrel found that the boy was harmless without any weapons. Besides, he gave it pieces of cake and biscuit. Thus they became friends.)

3. What did the friends of the squirrel think about his friendship with a human? What might have made them think so?

(The friends of the squirrel probably might have thought him headstrong and foolish to trust a human. Because human beings treat animals heartlessly or kill them for their selfish motives.)

4. How was the banyan tree the noisiest place during the fig season?

(During the fig season the banyan tree was full of fruits. Different kinds of birds flocked into its branches. They were squabbling with each other all the time.)

5. How did the boy make the spring season exciting for himself?

(During the spring season the boy had built a small platform halfway up the tree. Often he spent the afternoons reading books and looking down at the funny world below.)

6. What was the incident that triggered a long lasting excitement for the boy in summer?

(One afternoon the boy saw a mongoose and a cobra fighting with each other. This triggered a long lasting excitement for the boy in summer.)

7. How did the cobra regard his opponent? Were they true warriors?

(The cobra regarded his opponent as a superb fighter, clever and aggressive. Yes, they were true warriors.)

8. How did the mongoose manage to escape from the snake’s bite?

(The thickness of the mongoose’ hair helped it to save itself from the snake’s bite.)

9. The cobra was a good fighter. Pick out one of his fighting techniques?

(The cobra stood on the defensive, swaying slowly from side to side. It was trying to mesmerize his opponent into making a false move.)

10. The mongoose proved that he was clever. Can you cite any instance of his cleverness?

(The mongoose knew the mesmerizing power of the cobra’s glassy unwinking eyes. It deliberately avoided them by making a fixed gaze at a point just below its hood. Then it began the attack.)

11. What were the reactions of the spectators when the cobra struck?

(The moment the cobra struck, the spectators- the myna and the crow- hurled themselves at it.)

12. How did the crow push itself into trouble?

(Both the myna and the crow interfered in the fight. But the myna flew to safety. The crow tried to pull up in mid-air and turn back. But the cobra struck with great force. His snout thudded against the crow’s body and the crow died.)

13. Why is the Myna said to be wise? (When the Myna witnessed the death of the crow, it realised that it would be risky for its life. It refrained from interfering into the fight. So it is said to be wise.)

14. Who won the battle? What made the myna peer into the bushes? (The mongoose won the battle. The myna peered into the bushes to ensure the death of the cobra.)

15. What prevented Grandfather from taming the mongoose?

(Grandfather knew well that a wild mongoose was more useful than a domesticated one. So he didn’t try to tame the mongoose.)

16. Why would Grandmother forgive the mongoose for stealing the eggs?

(The mongoose kept the snakes away from the house. So Grandmother would forgive the mongoose for stealing the eggs.)

17. Who was the new friend of the squirrel? How did they enjoy their friendship?

(The white rat was the new friend of the squirrel. They enjoyed their friendship by going off together on little excursions among the branches.)

18. How did the boy come to know that the squirrel was building a nest?

(One day the boy found some straw and grass falling out from his pockets. Then he came to know that the squirrel was building a nest.)

19. What was the wonder, that nature had kept for them in the nest?

(The boy found three white baby squirrels in the nest. That was the wonder that nature had kept for them.)

Activity 1

Revisit the story and complete the story tree.

Characters

- Grandfather - a sixty five year old man.
- The boy - a lover of nature.
- Grandmother - wise old lady.
- Myna - a clever bird.
- Squirrel - friendly.
- Red Bottomed bulbul - cheerful and greedy.
- Rosy Pastors - gossiping.
- Cobra - skilful and experienced fighter.
- Mongoose - clever and aggressive.
- White Rat - was bought from the bazar.

Main Events

- The boy’s friendship with the squirrel.
- The fight between a mongoose and a cobra.
- The interference of a myna and a crow in the battle.
- Friendship between the gray squirrel and the white rat.
- Birth of three white squirrels.

Settings

- The house and grounds of Ruskin Bond’s home at Dehradun in India.
- The magnificent old banyan tree.
- The small platform built on the banyan tree.

Activity 2

The boy in the story ‘Adventures in a Banyan Tree’ was very much thrilled of his acquaintance with the squirrel. He writes a letter to his friend telling him about his new friend. Help him to complete the letter. (Hints for letter writing are given on page 88).

LETTER

Ivy Cottage
Landour Cantt
Dehradun

28. April. 1997

Dear Sravan,
How are you? Hope you are fine and enjoying your vacation there. I am doing the same here, at grandpa’s house. I have got a new friend here. It is a small squirrel. At first it was indifferent to me. When it found that I was not harmful, it slowly became friendly with me. It became familiar enough to take food from my hands. My dear, I am very excited now. I want to spend a lot of time with this little cute fellow.

Hope all of you are keeping fine there. With love and warm regards.

Your Lovingly
Sd/-
Ruskin Bond

Activity 3

Watching the nature around us is really interesting. Each and every living being has its own characteristics. The boy in the story narrates certain features of a few animals. List them out.

SQUIRREL

I have a new friend in the banyan tree. It is a grey squirrel. It was very cute when I first met it. It was very young. It was also very small and grey in colour. At first it was afraid of me. Later it found that I was not harmful. Then it became very friendly with me. It even trusts me to take food from my hands. I usually give it pieces of cake and biscuits. It developed an affair with the white rat which was brought by grandfather from the market. Three white squirrels are born. The white rat must be the father.

SNAKE

One afternoon I was sitting in the banyan tree. I saw a snake and a mongoose fighting with each other. The snake was huge and black. It was a skilful and experienced fighter. It could move swiftly and strike with the speed of light. Its forked tongue darted in and out. It swayed slowly from side to side and tried to mesmerize the mongoose.

MONGOOSE

One afternoon I was sitting in the banyan tree. I saw a snake and a mongoose fighting with each other. The mongoose was grey in colour and three feet long. It was a superb fighter. It was clever and aggressive too. It refused to meet the glassy unwinking eyes of the snake. It bushed his tail. It attacked the cobra on the back and fixed the point just below its hood. It made a feint to one side as the cobra dashed towards it.

Activity 4

The boy was thrilled at seeing the fight between the cobra and the mongoose. You may also have the same feeling. Narrate the fight scene in your own words.

The fight between the mongoose and the cobra.

(If you are asked to write it in the boy’s point of view, begin like ‘One afternoon I was sitting.....’ instead of ‘One afternoon **the boy** was sitting’)

One afternoon the boy was sitting on the platform half way up the banyan tree. He saw a small mongoose and a huge black cobra fighting to death. Both of them were skilful fighters. At first the cobra struck. But the mongoose avoided it and bit the snake on the back. In its turn the cobra darted away out of reach.

The cobra struck again and missed the object. When the cobra was weakening, the mongoose vigorously took it by the snout. The cobra writhed and lashed about in a frightening manner. It even coiled itself about the mongoose but all in vain. The mongoose hung grimly on, until the snake had ceased to struggle. It then smelt it and gripped around the hood and dragged it into the bushes.

Besides the boy, a myna and a crow also were witnessing the fight. They tried to intervene in the fight. It led to the death of the crow. Seeing the death of the crow, the myna wisely refrained from interfering again.

Activity 5

'And amongst the wool were the three baby squirrels - all of them white!' The boy couldn't stop wondering about the white squirrels. If he scribbled down this unforgettable sight in his diary, how would it be?

(Hints for Diary are given on page 88)

DIARY

15th June 1997 Monday 8 p.m.

Dear Diary,

Nature's Wonder!

What a surprise! How could we believe our eyes! White baby squirrels! We had never seen white squirrels before. We gazed at them in wonder. We were puzzled too. But Grandfather assured that the white rat must be the father. White offsprings for grey squirrel! What a great amazement! Nature may have more wonders in stock for us!

Ruskin Bond.

Activity 6

A. The silhouettes of some scenes from the story are given here. Identify the scenes and give cut lines.

1. The small squirrel became friendly and familiar enough to take food from his hands.
2. The boy built a small platform half way up the banyan tree and started to spend his leisure time in the afternoons in reading.
3. One day he was sitting in the tree. He came to see a fight between a cobra and a mongoose. A crow and a myna were the spectators of the fight. When the cobra struck, they hurled themselves at him. They collided heavily in mid-air.
4. At the end of the fight the mongoose won and dragged the cobra into a bush by holding its hood.
5. Then one day grandfather brought a white rat from the bazar. It became a friend of the squirrel in the tree.
6. One day the boy looked in the nest of the squirrel. For his surprise he saw three white baby squirrels. It was the first time that he saw white squirrels.

B. Based on the cut lines, prepare a narrative.

(Hints for Narrative are given on page 87)

NARRATIVE

The squirrel became a good friend of the small boy. It was not afraid even to take food from his hands. The boy built a small platform half way up the banyan tree. He spent his afternoons on the platform reading books. One day he was sitting in the tree. He witnessed a fight between a cobra and a mongoose. A crow and a myna were the spectators to it. When the cobra struck, both the crow and the myna hurled themselves at him. They collided heavily in mid-air. The crow was killed by the snake. The myna stopped interfering. At the end of the fight the mongoose won. It dragged the cobra into a bush by holding its hood.

Another day grandfather brought a white rat from the bazar. It developed a friendship with the grey squirrel in the tree. A few days later the boy noticed that the squirrel was trying to make a nest for the birth of its babies. To his surprise he found three white baby squirrels. It was the first time that he saw white squirrels.

Activity 7

a. A single banyan tree creates such beauty and harmony. How will it be if we have such beauty everywhere? What should we do for the conservation of nature? Discuss.

"Save nature, Nature will save you." The banyan tree described in the lesson is a typical form of beauty created by nature. The banyan tree becomes a home and a resting place for many creatures. Different kinds of animals and birds come there for satiating their hunger. There they squabble with each other. If we have such trees and beauty everywhere, our mother earth will become a heaven. There is no difference between human beings and animals.

Now a days such kind of beauty is shrunk to tourist areas and reserved forest areas. Birds and other animals are disappearing from our planet. How can we bring back the beauty of nature once again?

Some of the solutions are:-

1. Plant plenty of trees and protect them.
2. Reduce the use of herbicides, insecticides and so on.
3. Don't throw plastics, wastes and other such things in the open spaces in Nature; reduce, recycle and re-use them.
4. Avoid hunting and hurting birds and animals.
5. Use the resources of Nature carefully and effectively.
6. Don't exploit Nature for our selfish motives.
7. Each one become a self-protector of Nature.

**b. Prepare a digital poster on the theme
'Conservation of Nature'.**



Activity 8

The story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree' portrays the happy childhood of the writer blended with enchanting nature. Can the future generation enjoy such a beautiful life? Analyse the following pictures and identify the environmental issues portrayed in them.

1. Issue: Deforestation

What is the dreadful impact of this?

Impacts: loss of habitat, increased greenhouse gases, reducing the level of water in the atmosphere, soil erosion and flooding, destruction of homelands.

2. Issue: Increase of plastic wastes.

How will this affect the environment?

Impacts: Filling of the earth with plastic wastes can afflict the land, waterways and oceans. Plastic lasts forever and it kills every creature on the earth including man.

3. Issue: Global warming.

What are the reasons and consequences?

Impacts: Rise of sea water and increased coastal flooding, more forest fires, melting of ice on the mountains, growing health impacts, increase in extreme weather events, severe draughts in many areas, increased death rates in rocky areas, plants and animal range shifts.

Discuss the following questions.

Do you think these are very serious threats to our earth? (Yes)

What are the possible solutions for these issues?

- Afforestation.

- Protection of trees.
- Increase and maintenance of the forest area.
- Avoid plastic carry bags.
- Recycle the plastic for effective use.
- Don't litter.
- Control carbon emission.
- Turn from plastic to other effective materials.
- Reduce the number of private vehicles.
- Plant more trees.
- Avoid burning plastic and other wastes.

Conduct a seminar on the topic 'Save the Earth.'

We observe June 5th every year as World Environment Day' for creating awareness about the conservation of nature.

Let us make a documentary on this topic for public awareness.

- Collect videos/pictures of natural disasters.
- Collect pictures and videos showing the human activities that lead to these disasters.
- Shoot and record your narration, anchoring, discussions etc.
- Edit it using appropriate software.
(e.g. audacity, open shot video editor etc.)
- Add titles and subtitles. (e.g. Gnome subtitle)

Start now

Let's learn about words

Activity 1

1. Pick out the words and phrases used to describe the fight of each warrior.

Snake

Moved swiftly.

Struck with speed of light.

Forked tongue darting in and out.

Swayed slowly from side to side.

Tried to mesmerize the mongoose.

Mongoose

Made a feint to one side.

Darted swiftly.

Refused to meet the glassy unwinking eyes of the snake.

Bushed his tail.

Attacked the snake on the back.

Fixed the point just below the cobra's hood.

Activity 2

Read the sentences given below.

He was a very young squirrel, and his friends and relatives probably thought him *headstrong* and *foolish* for trusting a human. He was a very young squirrel, and his friends and relatives probably thought him *unruly* and *silly* for trusting a human.

Both these sentences mean almost the same. The words in italics in the first sentence replaced with their synonyms in the second sentence.

Rewrite the passage using synonyms of the words underlined.

1. In the spring, when the banyan tree was full of small (tiny) red figs, birds of all kinds would flock (gather) into its branches, the red-bottomed bulbul, cheerful and greedy (insatiable); gossiping (blathering) rosy pastors; and parrots and crows, squabbling with each other all the time. During the fig season, the banyam tree was the noisiest (loudest) place on the road.

Now read the following sentence.

He had never tried taming it, because a wild mongoose was more useful than a domesticated one.

What function do the underlined words perform in this sentence? (They qualify the noun mongoose.)

Look at the following word card.

Word	foolish
Category	adjective
Synonyms	silly, stupid, idiotic, witless
Antonym	wise
Sentence using the word/synonyms	He is a foolish fellow.
Sentence using the antonym	He is a wise man.
An activity with the word	make meaningful words by suffixing or prefixing the word. e.g. foolishness.

Prepare more word cards picking words from the lesson.

Word	Resent
Category	verb
Synonym	begrudge
Antonym	accept
Sentence using Synonym	I deeply begrudged her criticism.
Sentence using Antonym	I totally accepted her advice.
An activity with the word	make meaningful words by suffixing or prefixing the word. e.g. resentment

Word

Category

Synonym

Antonym

Sentence using Synonym

Sentence using Antonym

An activity with the word

Friend

noun

companion

enemy

This is my companion Tom.

He has a lot of enemies in his company.

make meaningful words by suffixing or prefixing the word.
e.g. friendship

Activity 3

Read the following sentences.

- It was an old banyan tree.
- The tree was older than the house.
- It was the oldest banyan tree in the town.

In sentence 1, the adjective 'old' merely tells us that the banyan tree is old. (Positive Degree)

In sentence 2, the adjective 'older' is used to **compare two things**. (Comparative Degree.)

In sentence 3, the adjective 'oldest' tells us that there is nothing more than that. (Superlative Degree)

(Refer to Degrees of Comparison Page 54 and Interchange of Degrees of Comparison Page 53.)

Fill in the blanks suitably.

- No other bird is as.....as a crow. (clever, cleverer, cleverest)
- The grey mongoose was.....than the cobra. (aggressive, more aggressive, most aggressive)
- The banyan tree was theplace on the road. (noise, noisier, noisiest)
- The cobra was afighter. (skilful, more skilful, most skilful)
- The evening was.....than the morning. (hot, hotter, hottest)
- The myna was as.....as the crow. (contented, more contented, most contented)
- It was the.....fight of the snake with the mongoose. (bad, worse, worst)
- It was one of the.....vacations the boy had. (unforgettable, more unforgettable, most unforgettable)
- Grandfather is the.....member of the family. (old, elder, eldest)
- The mongoose darted in as.....as the cobra. (swiftly, more swiftly, most swiftly)

Ans: 1. clever. 2. more aggressive. 3. noisiest. 4. skilful. 5. hotter. 6. contented. 7. worst. 8. most unforgettable. 9. eldest. 10. swiftly.

EXAM BASED QUESTIONS**I. Read the passage and answer the questions.****A. Paragraphs 1 and 2.**

1. What was the source of endless pleasure to the boy in his grandfather's house in Dehradun?
2. Which sentence in the passage tells you that grandfather was weakening?
3. Where was grandfather's house located?
4. Was the small squirrel friendly with the boy at first?
5. Find the word from the passage that means 'kingdom'.

B. Paragraphs 3,4 and 5.

1. When would different kinds of birds flock into the branches of the banyan tree?
2. Where did the boy build a small platform?
3. What did make up the boy's banyan tree library?
4. Find the word from the passage that means 'noisy quarrel'.

II. NARRATIVE

- A. Narrate** the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'.
- B.** A single banyan tree creates such beauty and harmony. How will it be if we have such beauty everywhere? What should we do for the conservation of nature? **Discuss.**

III. CHARACTER-SKETCH

Prepare a **character-sketch** of Grandfather in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'.

IV. DESCRIPTION

- A. Describe** the **mongoose** in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'.
- B.** Describe the **cobra** in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'.
- C.** Describe the **Banyan Tree** in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'.

V. NEWS REPORT

In the story, 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree', we read, 'The Countess of Desmond an English woman who lived to the age of 117, and would have lived longer if she hadn't fallen while climbing an apple tree.' Prepare the **news report** of the fall and death of The Countess of Desmond.

VI. DIARY ENTRY

- A.** After getting acquainted with the squirrel, the boy in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree', writes his diary. Prepare his **diary entry**.
- B.** The boy in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree', was excited to see the thrilling fight between the snake and the mongoose. That night, he wrote his feelings in his diary. Prepare the likely **diary entry**.

VII. CONVERSATION

- A.** After watching the deadly fight between the mongoose and the cobra, the boy ran to his grandfather and started a conversation. Write the **conversation** between the boy and his grandfather.
- B.** Imagine that you meet the boy in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'. You ask him about the fight between the mongoose and the cobra. Prepare the likely **conversation**.

VIII. PROFILE

Prepare a **profile** of Ruskin Bond. (Hints are given on page 17)

IX. Rewrite the passage using synonyms of the words underlined.

Grandfather had never seen white squirrels before, and we **(a) stared** at them in **(b) amazement**. We were confused for some time, but when I **(c) suggested** the white rat's frequent visits to the tree, grandfather told me that the rat must be the father.

X. NOTICE

The English Club of your school invites the noted writer Ruskin Bond to inaugurate a three day literary festival in your school. Prepare a **notice** to invite the parents, teachers and students of the school to the function.

ANSWERS - EXAM BASED QUESTIONS

I.A. 1. The spreading branches of the banyan tree which curved to the ground and took root again gave the boy endless pleasure. 2. 'Grandfather, at the age of sixty five, could no longer climb it'. 3. Grandfather's house was in Dehradun. 4. No. At first the small squirrel seemed to resent to the boy's invasion of his privacy. 5. Domain.

B. 1. When the banyan tree was full of small red figs in the spring season, birds of all kinds would flock into its branches. 2. Halfway up the tree, the boy had built a small platform for reading. 3. Adventure stories like "Treasure Island", "Huckleberry Finn" etc. made up the boy's banyan tree library. 4. Squabble.

II. Same as Summary

III. GRANDFATHER

Ruskin Bond's Grandfather appears in the story 'Adventures in a Banyan Tree'. He is the eldest member of the family. He is sixty five. Yet he is active and vigorous. He loves his grandson very much. He is happy at the victory of the mongoose in the single combat. He encourages the mongoose to live in the garden. Because it would keep the snakes away. He is a man of wisdom. He doesn't tame the mongoose because he knows that a wild mongoose is more useful than a domesticated one. When he sees the white baby- squirrels he, is astonished and tells that the white rat must be the father. He knows that rats and squirrels are related to each other. He is also a lover of nature like the boy in the story.

IV. A. THE MONGOOSE

The Mongoose appears in the story ‘Adventures in a Banyan Tree’ written by Ruskin Bond. The mongoose and the snake are considered as universal enemies. In this story also the cobra is an enemy of the mongoose. The mongoose is a small one compared to the cobra. It is three feet long and grey in colour. But it is a superb fighter, clever and aggressive. In fight it is very skilful and shrewd. At the end of the fight it aggressively wins the battle.

B. THE COBRA

The cobra appears in the story ‘Adventures in a Banyan Tree’, written by Ruskin Bond. It is huge and black in colour. It is a poisonous one. The sacs behind its long, sharp fangs are full of deadly venom. He can move swiftly and strike with the speed of light. But it is not as skilful as the small mongoose in the single combat. Even though it fights bravely with its opponent it doesn’t succeed. Finally it is dragged to the bushes by the mongoose.

C. THE BANYAN TREE

The old beautiful banyan tree appears in the story ‘Adventures in a Banyan Tree’, written by Ruskin Bond. It occupies the central role in the story. The thread of the major plot of the story revolves around it. The boy - the protagonist - is deeply associated with this tree. He would spend his leisure in it. The tree with its spreading branches forms a maze of arches. This gives immense pleasure to the boy. It is older than Grandfather and the house itself. Half way up the tree the boy has built a platform. He reads books there. By depicting his adventures in the banyan tree the narrator tries to convey his communion with nature.

V. NEWS REPORT

The Countess of Desmond Passes Away

Staff Reporter

11 June, 2020

Desomond : Her Highness, The Countess of Desmond, Katherine Edgar, who was admitted to the City Hospital here, following a fall from an apple tree, passed away today. She was 117. While climbing the tree for plucking fruits, she slipped and fell down. She succumbed to her injuries and died at around 8.00 a.m. She is survived by her son and daughter. Her funeral will be held at 10 a.m. on 14th June at Westminster Abby, London.

VI. A. DIARY

11 June 2020 Friday 8 p.m.

Dear Diary,

An Exciting Day!

What an exciting day it was! I could make friendship with a little squirrel. What a soft and gentle creature it is! A tamed one! Now we are close friends. I can even stroke its soft silky hair. How cute it is! At first it was afraid of me and darted off. But gradually it became friendly with me. Today to my amazement it took food from my hands. I would like to play with it. It will be a nice companion for me here. May it be smart enough to save itself from the big jaws of snakes!

Ruskin Bond.

VI. B. DIARY

11 June 2020 Friday 8 p.m.

Dear Diary,

An Exciting Day!

What an exciting day it was! This afternoon I was sitting on the platform half way up the banyan tree. I saw a small mongoose and a huge black cobra fighting to death. Both of them were skilful fighters. At first the cobra struck. But the mongoose avoided it and bit the snake on the back. In its turn the cobra darted away out of reach. The cobra struck again and missed the object. When the cobra was weakening, the mongoose vigorously took it by the snout. The cobra writhed and lashed about in a frightening manner. It even coiled itself about the mongoose but all in vain. The mongoose hung grimly on, until the snake had ceased to struggle. It then smelt it and gripped around the hood and dragged it into the bushes. In between a myna and a crow tried to intervene in the fight. It led to the death of the crow. Seeing the death of the crow, the myna wisely refrained from interfering again.

Ruskin Bond.

VII. A. Grandfather: Why do you look so excited?

Boy : Granddad, I have seen something very exciting.

Grandfather : What have you seen?

Boy : I have seen a mongoose and a cobra fighting with each other in the garden.

Grandfather : Where were you then?

Boy : I was in the banyan tree.

Grandfather : I think you were not frightened, were you?

Boy : No, I wasn’t frightened.

Grandfather : Who did win the battle?

Boy : The mongoose won the battle.

Grandfather : The mongoose is a useful animal. You had better don’t disturb it.

Boy : Yes. I won’t disturb it anymore.

B. Same as ‘A’ above. Instead of ‘Grandfather’, use ‘Friend’.

