

How to Tell Wild Animals

Answers to NCERT Questions

Thinking About The Poem

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

Ans: 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'.

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

Ans: The poet suggests that if a large and tawny beast in the jungle in the east advances towards us, then it is an Asian lion. We can identify the lion 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 a Bengal tiger. We can identify it when it eats us.

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

Ans: 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.

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)?

Ans: A 'bearhug' is a 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.

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?

Ans: The line "A 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 a rhyme scheme of the poem. By writing it incorrectly, 'nonplus' rhymes with 'thus'.

6. 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 language(s)?

Ans: Yes, many poets take such liberties to create proper rhyming. These are for example: Kirk is used for 'church' to rhyme with 'work'. Ken is used for 'see' to rhyme with 'pen'.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

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...

- a. Where should you go by chance?
- b. How does the described animal look?
- c. How will you know that it is an Asian lion?
- d. What do you mean by 'the east'?

Ans:

- a. You should go to jungles in the east by chance.
- b. The described animal looks large and yellow-coloured.
- c. It will roar at you when you are dying with fear.
- d. 'The east' means the countries in the eastern part of the world.

2. Or if some time when roaming around,

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.

- a. Who is the noble wild beast?
- b. Describe its appearance.
- c. Where will you encounter the Bengal Tiger?

- d. What are the rhyming words in this stanza?

Ans:

- a. The noble wild beast is the Bengal Tiger.
- b. He has black stripes on a yellow background.
- c. You will encounter him while roaming in the jungle.
- d. The rhyming words are:

round – ground

you – you

learn – discern

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.

- a. How is the leopard's skin?
- b. How does a leopard behave when he meets a person?
- c. Will roar with pain help a person when the leopard has attacked him?
- d. Which are the rhyming words in this stanza?

Ans:

- a. The leopard has spots on his skin.
- b. When he meets a person he leaps on him at once.
- c. No, it will not help him. The leopard will only eat him up.
- d. The rhyming words are :

view – you

peppered – leopard

pain – again

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.

- a. Name the poem and the poet.
- b. Where can you meet the bear?

- c. What does the bear do on meeting a person?
- d. What is the rhyming scheme of this stanza?

Ans:

- a. The poem is 'How to Tell Wild Animals' and the poet is 'Carolyn Wells'.
- b. We can meet the bear around our yard.
- c. The bear hugs the person very hard when he meets.
- d. The rhyme scheme of this stanza is 'abab'.

5. If you have any doubts, I guess

He'll give you just one more caress.

Though to distinguish beasts of prey

A novice might nonplus,

- a. Who is 'he' in the second line?
- b. How will 'he' react to the human being?
- c. About what may we have a doubt?
- d. What can nonplus a victim?

Ans:

- a. 'He' is a bear in the second line.
- b. 'He' will embrace tightly the human being.
- c. We may have a doubt about the strength of a bear.
- d. Distinguishing beasts of prey can nonplus a victim.

6. The Crocodile you always may

Tell from the Hyena thus :

Hyenas come with merry smiles ;

But if they weep they're Crocodiles.

- a. How do the hyenas come?
- b. What is so distinct about crocodiles?
- c. How can you differentiate a crocodile from a hyena?
- d. Write the rhyming words in this stanza.

Ans:

- a. Hyenas come with merry smiles.
- b. Crocodiles are distinct by their weeping.
- c. A crocodile is always weeping while a hyena looks always smiling.
- d. The rhyming words are: smiles-crocodiles

7. The true Chameleon is small,

A lizard sort of thing;
He hasn't any ears at all,
And not a single wing.
If there is nothing on the tree,
'Tis the chameleon you see.

- a. How does a chameleon look?
- b. What two things does a chameleon not have?
- c. Where is the chameleon generally found?
- d. Why can't we see the chameleon on the trees?

Ans:

- a. A chameleon looks like a lizard.
- b. A chameleon does not have ears and wings.
- c. The chameleon is generally found on trees.
- d. We can't see the chameleon on the trees because it can change its body colour according to its surroundings.

Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. How does one identify a chameleon?

Ans: A chameleon resembles a lizard and is a small, wingless, fearless creature. The poet says that when there is nothing visible on the tree, there is the chameleon camouflaged with the tree.

2. Name the different animals and birds found in the jungles of the east.

Ans: Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Bear, Hyena, Crocodiles and Chameleons.

3. What is the famous saying associated with crocodiles and what does it mean?

Ans: The famous saying associated with crocodiles is that of 'shedding crocodile tears'. It actually means the tears or expressions of sorrow are insincere, and are said to be so named from a belief that crocodiles wept while devouring their prey.

4. Peppered spots, tawny beast and noble wild beast live in the jungles along with some others. Name them.

Ans: The leopard, the lion and the Bengal Tiger live along with the bear, hyenas, crocodiles and chameleons.

5. What is the theme of the poem, 'How to Tell Wild Animals'?

Ans: The theme of the poem is to create humour. The poet creates humour by suggesting dangerous ways of identifying wild animals. You can identify most of the beasts while they are attacking you. Instead of shouting for help or trying to protect yourself, you are busy identifying the attacker—the idea creates humour.

6. What does the poet say about the Asian lion in this poem?

Ans: The poet says that the Asian lion is a large beast. He is brownish-yellow in colour. He is found in the forests of the eastern countries of the world. His roar is very loud and terrifying.

7. How does the Bengal Tiger look? What is so distinct about a hint?

Ans: The poet says that the Bengal Tiger roams in the forest and looks noble. His skin is yellow and there are black stripes on it. As soon as the Bengal Tiger notices someone, he tries to eat him.

8. What do you learn about the leopard from this poem?

Ans: The poem tells us that a leopard has spots on his skin. As soon as he sees someone, he leaps over him at once and starts eating. He is so terrifying and powerful.

9. How does the poet describe the bear?

Ans: The poet suggests that the bear can enter a human colony also. That is why, you can encounter a bear even in your yard. As soon as the bear comes near a human being, he embraces him. This embrace appears loving. But in fact, it can be fatal.

10. Why does the poet say that a bear's 'hug' may confuse a novice?

Ans: It is the tendency of a bear to kill his victim by embracing him. He hugs the victim so tight that he usually dies. But a novice who does not know the ways of bears may misunderstand his hug. He may think that it is a loving embrace.

11. What does the poet say about the crocodile and the hyena?

Ans: The poet describes the crocodile and the hyena humorously. The hyena seems to be laughing. In fact, it does not laugh. Only its face appears so. On the other hand, the crocodile has tears in his eyes when it eats its victim. It appears as if he is shedding tears at the death of his victim. But this is not so.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Many animals can be identified according to the poet's suggestion. Name the animals. Which ones would you like to identify? Are there any lessons for us from this poem?

Ans: The poet has listed down the ways of identifying seven animals in the poem, viz., and the Asian lion, the Bengal Tiger, the leopard, the bear, the hyena, crocodiles and chameleons. As for me, I would like to identify the bear, the Bengal Tiger and the leopard. However, putting my life on the line just to identify the tiger and the leopard doesn't seem worth the risk! So if I see a noble beast with black stripes on yellow, I'll know the tiger, and the peppered spots will reveal the leopard. The bear hug, I wouldn't mind! The poet, using humour, seems to warn readers against venturing too close to these animals.

2. The poet has successfully used humour to be able to 'tell' or identify 'wild animals'. How do you think we need lots of it in our daily life?

Ans: Humour is the fuel of life. Without it, it would become difficult to continue living. Today, the life of a common man is typically mired in stress, tension, problems and sadness. It is amazing how the smallest problems may take on epic proportions for a common person. In such a situation, it becomes necessary to have a little humour in life. It gives us the much-needed respite from our monotonous routine and helps us face life more positively. Thus, the poet's successful use of humour helps liven our minds and brings a smile on our faces.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

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...

- Where can you meet a lion?
- How, according to the poet, can you identify him?
- What is the poet's real purpose to give such a suggestion?
- Which expression in the above stanza means 'a brown coloured wild animal'?

2. The true Chameleon is small,

A lizard sort of thing;

He hasn't any ears at all,

And not a single wing.

If there is nothing on the tree,

'Tis the chameleon you see.

- a. Which other creature does a chameleon resemble?
- b. How does the poet describe a chameleon?
- c. What does the poet want?
- d. Why can't one see a chameleon on the tree?

Short Answer Questions

1. Where are Asian lions found and how do they look?
2. How is Bengal Tiger described in the poem?
3. How is the leopard's skin? How does a leopard behave when he meets a person?
4. What does the bear do?
5. How can we distinguish between a hyena and a crocodile?

Long Answer Questions

1. What humorous descriptions are given in the poem by the poet? Explain with reference to the poem, 'How to Tell Wild Animals'.
2. Do you agree with the poet's way of describing all the wild animals mentioned in the poem? Why/Why not? Write your views.