

7. The Frog And The Nightingale (Poetry)

1. Listed below are a few character traits of people. Some are positive qualities, while others are not. Tick marks the ones you feel are desirable qualities in a person.

Characteristic	Tick Mark	Characteristic	Tick Mark	Characteristic	Tick Mark
Insensitive		High- headed		Manipulative	
Humorous		Egoistic		Patronizing	
Naïve		Humble		Submissive	
Opportunistic		Foolish		Arrogant	
Creative		Original		Conniving	
Disapproving		Helpful		Innocent	
Commanding		Calculative		Condescending	
Benevolent		Crafty		Scheming	
Simple		Wise		Rude	
Overbearing		Generous		Boastful	
Sly		Gentle		Proud	
Territorial		Aggressive		Servile	

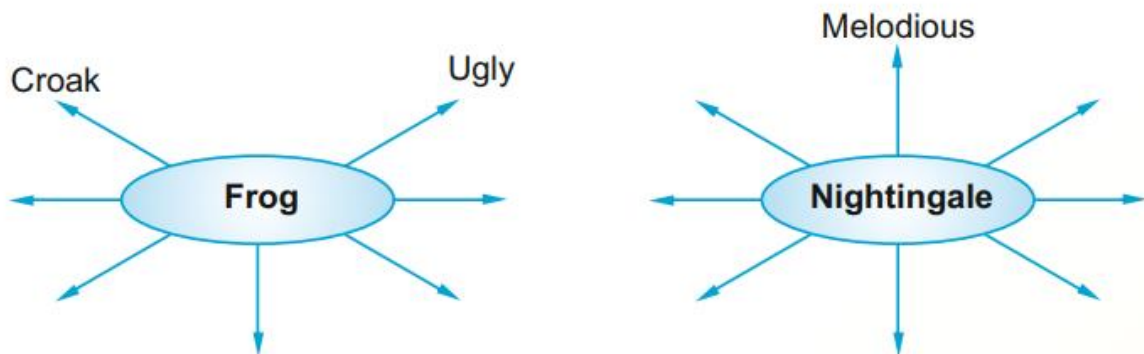
Ans: The following are the qualities desirable in a person:

Humorous,
Creative,
Benevolent,
Simple,
Humble,
Helpful,
Gentle,
Generous,
Wise,
Innocent,
Condescending.

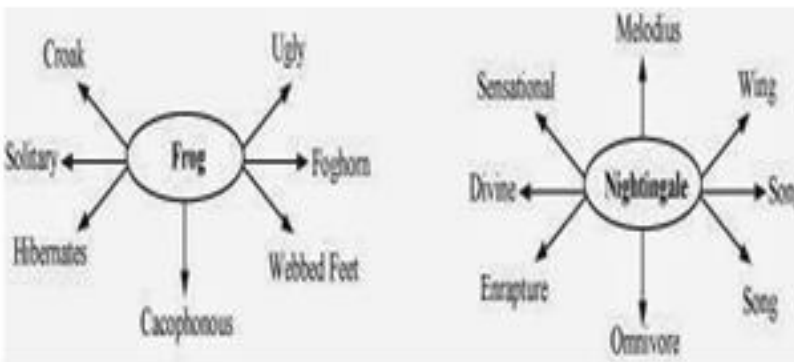
2. Have you come across people who are not what they seem to be – like someone who is extremely friendly and helpful yet you are not very comfortable with him /her as you feel it is a put-on? Have a class discussion about such people and why you feel as you do.

Ans: Yes, I have come across such persons. They pretend for having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs etc., that they don't really possess. At first, they are or can be successful in impressing others. However, when the real picture is revealed, they are subjected to embarrassment and humiliation. They also lose their popularity and the previously formed impression gets marred.

3. Before you read the poem complete the word - web with the words that we associate with a Frog and a Nightingale.



Ans:



5. The following is a summary of the poem but it is jumbled up. Write out the events in their correct order to form a continuous paragraph.

(a) As a result, her voice lost its beauty, and the other creatures stopped coming to hear her sing.

(b) Soon the nightingale became famous, and creatures from miles around came to hear her sing.

- (c) All the creatures in the bog cheered and clapped at her beautiful song.
 (d) He offered to train the nightingale, so that she could sing even more beautifully.
 (e) So the frog could sing unrivalled in the bog once more.
 (f) The next night the frog introduced himself.
 (g) The frog charged an admission fee, and earned a lot of money from these concerts.
 (h) A frog croaked all night in a bog, in an unpleasant voice.
 (i) But the frog made the nightingale rehearse continuously in the rain.
 (j) One night a nightingale began to sing in a melodious voice.
 (k) Finally, the nightingale burst a vein and died.

Answer:

a — 9 b — 4 c — 3 d — 6 e — 11 g — 7 h — 1 i — 8 j — 2 k — 10

6. Now that you have read the poem, add more personality traits to the word-web of the frog and the nightingale as depicted in the poem. Then complete the table given below. (Some of the words in the box below may help you. You may also use the words given in Q.1.)

Character	Extract	Personality traits
Nightingale	Sorry – was that you who spoke?	Polite, Timorous
Frog	Yes,... you see, I'm the frog who owns this tree In this bog I've long been known For my splendid baritone.	
Nightingale	Did you...did you like my song?	
Frog	Not too bad – but far too long The technique was fine, of course, But it lcfcked a certain force.	
Frog	Without proper training such as 1 And a few others pan supply You'll remain a mere beginner. But with me you'll be a winner.	
Nightingale	But 1 can't sing in this weather.	
Nightingale	...This is a fairy tale – And you're Mozart in disguise Come to earth before my eyes.	
Frog	Come, my dear – we'll sing together.	
Frog	We must aim for better billing You still owe- me sixty shillings.	

Frog	Brainless bird – you’re on the stage Use your wits and follow fashion. Puff your lungs out with your passion.	
Frog	...I tried to teach her. But she was a stupid creature.	

Dismissive	Nervous	Timid	Presumptuous	Superior	Fawning
Shy	Polite	Meek	Possessive	Dominating	Mercenary

Answer:

Frog	Dominating, Possessive
Nightingale	Meek, Naive
Frog	Presumptuous, Conniving
Frog	Superior, Sly, Arrogant
Nightingale	Timid, Nervous
Nightingale	Fawning, Polite, Servile
Frog	Crafty, Patronizing
Frog	Mercenary, Manipulative
Frog	Insensitive, Commanding

Divide yourselves into groups of four or five and brainstorm on any one of the given situations in order to create an imaginary dialogue or a comic strip. Keep in mind the characters and situations while doing so. Representatives from each group could then present the dialogues/read them to the class.

Situations

- The efforts made by the other creatures of the bog to still the frog’s determination ‘to display his heart’s elation’.
- The first time the Nightingale sings.
- The nightingale is awestruck when the frog introduces himself.
- The practice session when it is raining.
- The nightingale is reprimanded by the frog when the box office crashes.

Answer:

(a) The frog is croaking loudly

Duck: Oh! what a cacophony! can't he be quiet?

Loon: (Pleading before frog) for God's sake, please have mercy on us. Stop singing.
(A teal threw a stone at the frog but it did not affect him)

Heron: (shouting at frog) You loathful fellow! Don't torture us with your crass behaviour.

Toad:

(b) The first time that the nightingale sings, the creatures in the bog listening to her with interest remark:

Nightingale: Oh! what a beautiful evening let me rest here for sometime and sing a song.

Frog: Eh! who is this singing here in my territory?

Nightingale: Umph! It's me, the nightingale.

Duck: lovely song! you are welcome here in the bog.

Heron: Oooh! we've never heard such an enthralling voice before,.

loon: (shedding tears of joy) "unbelievable".

Toads: Hush! sush! let's listen to her. She sings so sweetly.

Frog: Croak-Croak- Don't you know that I am the owner of this bog and only I have the right to sing here, humph!

Nightingale: Oops, I didn't know that! Did you like my song. (Responses may vary)

(c) Nightingale was ready to sing when she heard a croak.

Nightingale : (timidly) : Is that you who is croaking? Who are you?

Frog: (vainly) Croak! Croak! Don't you know, I am the unrivalled king of this bog?

Nightingale: Oh! It's my pleasure to meet you. Do you like my song?

Frog: Hmm! It's O.K. but you lack technique. I am famous for my baritone.

Nightingale:

(d) One morning it was raining and as usual, frog started training the nightingale.

Nightingale: Boom! I can't sing in this chilly weather.

Frog: Be brave! You silly bird. Just put on your scarf and start singing.

Nightingale: I'll try-koo-Oh-ah! Ko-ash! Ko-ash!" Oh! I'm feeling totally drained out.

Frog:

(e) The strenuous and gruelling schedule of singing had its effect on the nightingale and her song lost its charm.

Frog: Oh! people are no longer interested in coming to listen to the song. It's a great loss to me.

Nightingale: Aha! you selfish frog. Can't you see my woeful countenance? I can't sing any more.

Frog: What! Croak! Croak! How can you say that? Sing with energy and passion.

Nightingale:

Students are free to complete the conversation on their own by using these hints.

8. On the basis of your understanding of the poem, complete the sentences given below by choosing the appropriate option.

Answer:

1. The frog's aim was to

- (a) make the nightingale a sensation
- (b) make the nightingale as good a singer as him
- (c) maintain his supremacy in the bog
- (d) make a lot of money.

Answer:

- (c) maintain his supremacy in the bog

2. The animals reacted to the nightingale's song with

- (a) hatred
- (b) admiration
- (c) indifference
- (d) suggestions for improvement

Answer:

- (b) admiration

3. The nightingale accepted the frog's tutelage as she

- (a) was not confident of herself
- (b) wanted to become as good a singer as the frog
- (c) wanted to become a professional singer
- (d) was not a resident of Bingle Bog

Answer:

- (a) was not confident of herself

9. Read the stanza given below and complete the sentences by choosing the appropriate option.

*Day by day the nightingale
Grew more sorrowful and pale.
Night on night her tired song
Zipped and trilled and bounced along,
Till the birds and beasts grew tired
At a voice so uninspired
And the ticket office gross
Crashed, and she grew more morose -
For her ears were now addicted
To applause quite unrestricted,
And to sing into the night
All alone gave no delight.*

- i. The nightingale was sorrowful and pale because
- a. she had been practicing in the rain
 - b. she had been performing all night
 - c. she was losing confidence in herself
 - d. she was falling ill

- ii. The audience was tired of her song because
 - a. they had heard it many times
 - b. it had become mechanical
 - c. she looked tired
 - d. she had added trill to her song
- iii. She no longer enjoyed singing alone as
 - a. she wanted to sing only for titled crowd
 - b. she was now used to the appreciation she got
 - c. the frog was no longer with her
 - d. she had become proud of herself

Answer the following questions briefly.

Answer: 1 (ii) had been performing all night

Answer: 2 it had become mechanical

Answer: 3 (ii) she was now used to the appreciation she got.

10. Answer the following questions briefly.

(a) How did the creatures of Single bog react to the nightingale's singing?

Answer:

The creatures of Bingle Bog appreciated the sweet voice of the nightingale. Every one clapped for her generously. All the animals gathered around the sumac tree. Ducks and herons waded through water and reached where nightingale was singing.

(b) Which are the different ways in which the frog asserts his importance?

Answer:

The frog does not appreciate nightingale's song when all the creatures of the bog like her voice.

- He introduces himself to the nightingale as the owner of the tree, the writer and critic, and the best singer.
- He also offers himself to train the nightingale in singing and charges a high tuition fee. He makes her to give musical concerts and charges entry fee.
- He compels her to give performances and take music lessons from him.
- He reprimands her for not singing sweetly when the business crashes

(c) Why is the frog's joy both sweet and bitter?

Answer:

- The frog's joy is sweet because he was making a lot of money on the talent of the nightingale and earning a good business.
- But his joy turns bitter because he became jealous of the nightingale's popularity.

(d) Why was the frog angry?

Answer:

- The frog was angry because he lost his business and money.
- He blamed nightingale for this loss.

(e) How did the frog become the unrivalled king of the bog again?

Answer:

The frog snubbed nightingale for not performing well.

- The frog asked her to puff her lungs up
- She did what the frog asked her to do.
- She overstrained herself, a vein burst, she died.
- The frog became unrivalled king.

11. Discuss the following questions and write the answers in your note-books.

(a) Bring out the irony in the frog's statement—'Your song must be your own'.

Answer:

- When the nightingale said that her song was her own, the frog remarked that she should, not boast about that and gave lessons to improve her.
- Later when she died, frog hypocritically stole her statement and told the audience that he taught her to be original in her song.

(b) Do you think the end is justified?

Answer:

No, the end is not justified because the revenge of the nightingale's ruthless killing could not be taken as nobody could know frog's reality.

(c) Do you think the nightingale is 'brainless' ? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

Yes, the nightingale is truly brainless because she could not understand the crafty scheme of the frog.

- let herself be dominated by the frog, trusted him blindly.
- was not confident about her talent, relied on frog.
- was easily influenced by him and died of her own foolishness.

(d) In spite of having a melodious voice and being a crowd puller, the nightingale turns out to be a loser and dies. How far is she responsible for her own downfall?

Answer:

Nightingale despite being a crowd-puller and extremely talented singer fails utterly in surviving in the world of frivolities and value-less society. She should have practical wisdom and should

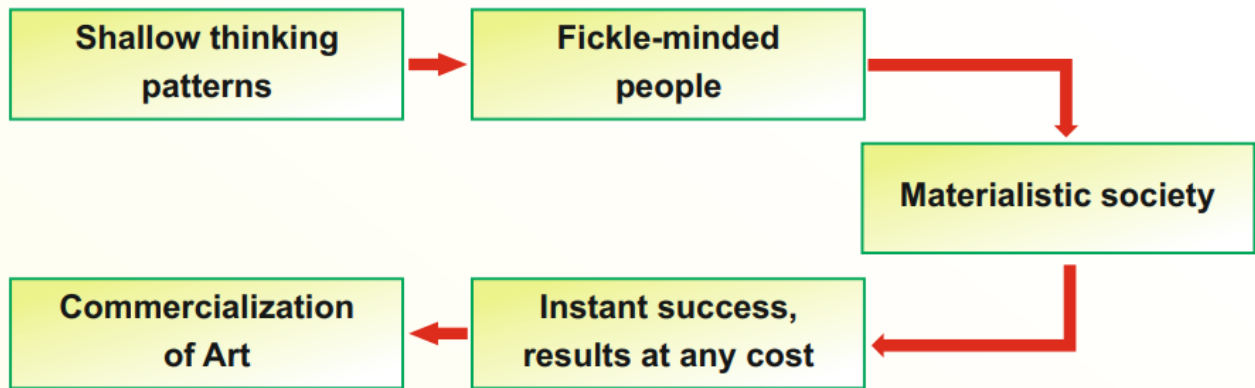
have been aware of the behaviour of the frog towards her. Had she been confident about her talent and worth and not have followed the frog blindly, she could have saved herself and emerged as a successful singer. She is largely responsible for her own downfall and tragic death.

(e) Do you agree with the Frog's inference of the Nightingale's character ? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

No, I am not completely convinced by the inference that the frog has about the nightingale's character. The nightingale is, in reality, a gullible bird but the frog portrayed her as a greedy and untalented bird. She won over the heart of her audience time and again with her original lyrics and compositions whereby the frog charged her with being stale. She was much better a singer than the frog but he made her take lessons from him. The frog presented the nightingale exactly the opposite to what she really was.

12. The Frog and the Nightingale is a spoof on the present society. Study the Mind Map given below. Divide yourselves into groups, select a box and discuss the statement given. Then present your views to the class.



Topics for CLASS DISCUSSION

- How a person tries to put down another when that person is succeeding in his or her life.
- Our self-image is often based on what others make us believe we are. A poor self-image can do irreparable damage to us. Do you agree with this statement? Elaborate with suitable reasons and examples.

Answer:

Instant Success, results at any cost

Group 1

In today's 'fast food' world, people want everything in the wink of an eye. They chase after unmaterialistic goals and end up wasting their precious time and energy. But in my opinion, to be successful in life, the quality of perseverance plays an important role.

Group 2

Success requires a person to accept responsibility and thinking that you will get success instantly is nothing but foolishness. Always remember that everything comes at a price. Passion, perseverance and perfection are the things that ensure success to a person.

Group 3

There is nothing like 'Instant success! In order to reach the highest level in any of

the thing, proper practice and training are must. But unfortunately, modern society is incredibly impatient and want everything overnight. They must relax and take their time to get the results of their endeavours. A sustained but continuous effort is sure to give you good results.

(This is a model answer. Responses may vary)

Class Discussion

A poor self-image can do irreparable damage to us. I fully agree with this statement and want to put before you a very wise quote by Albert Einstein. 'Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. We often tend to fear "what do people think about us?

This fear influences our personality to a great extent and we form an opinion of ourselves based on what others make us believe we are. Children are especially vulnerable to accepting criticism and suffer from poor body image issue. They are always nagged by fears like – "Are they laughing at me!' 'I'm good at nothing', I can never be of any use to anybody.' But these are destructive thoughts that result from a feeling of low self-esteem. My advice to you is to stop hating yourself and forgive yourself for your mistakes. Nobody has the right to challenge your self-esteem. It's your own life and you must live it your own way. Be the change and show the world.

Writing Task

13. The nightingale has scaled the heights of success. But now the audience is dwindling, the frog is unhappy and reprimands her all the time. She is mentally and physically exhausted and fears failure. As the nightingale, write a diary entry highlighting her fears and analyzing the reasons for her failure.

Answer:

July 10, 20XX

How lonesome and tired I am feeling! Today what I am, is a result of my short-sightedness. I was foolish enough to believe the scheming frog. Whatever he said, I accepted without questioning and could not see his real motives. Anxious to get instant success, I have brought ruin upon myself. I set unrealistic expectations for myself and failed to realize the implications of my actions. The frog was very cunning and befooled me easily and exploited me till the end. Now, I repent my haste as even the audience, who used to listen to my songs with delight, have dwindled. I am a failure. How I wish I would have assessed myself accurately and acknowledged my strengths and weaknesses.

14. Write an obituary for the nightingale. You may begin like this : May the kind soul (or you may make use of your own beginning).

Answer:

May the kind soul rest in peace. How sweet and innocent was she when she first came here pleasing us all with her melodious voice.

She was too innocent to understand the vile intentions of the sly frog.
Few moments ago, she was flying and singing like she always wanted to.
Now, she'll sing forever in the kingdom of God.

The bog is quiet now and our hearts long to hear you sing. God has lifted you in His arms and closed your weary eyes. And whispered 'Peace be thine.'

LISTENING TASK

15. Listen to your teacher recite the poem The Spider and the Fly by Mary Howitt and compare the Fly to Vikram Seth's Nightingale.

NIGHTINGALE	FLY

Answer:

Nightingale	Fly
Meek	Clever
Naive	Careful
Fawning	Confident
Innocent	Straightforward
Nervous	Practical