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Stories

A Thirsty Crow



One hot day, a thirsty crow flew all over the fields looking for water. For a long time, he could not find any. He felt very weak, almost lost all hope. Suddenly, he saw a water jug below the tree. He flew straight down to see if there was any water inside. Yes, he could see some water inside the jug!

The crow tried to push his head into the jug. Sadly, he found that the neck of the jug was too narrow. Then he tried to push the jug to tilt for the water to flow out, but the jug was too heavy.

The crow thought hard for a while. Then, looking around it, he saw some pebbles. He suddenly had a good idea. He started picking up the pebbles one by one, dropping each into the jug. As more and more pebbles filled the jug, the water level kept rising. Soon it was high enough for the crow to drink. His plan had worked! The crow drank the water happily and flew in the sky singing his favorite song.

Moral: Think smart, you may find a solution to any problem.

The Woodcutter and the Axe



Long ago, there lived a woodcutter in a small village. He was sincere in his work and very honest. Every day, he went into the nearby forest to cut trees. He brought the woods back into the village and sold them to a merchant and earned his money. He earned just enough to make a living, and he was satisfied with his simple living.

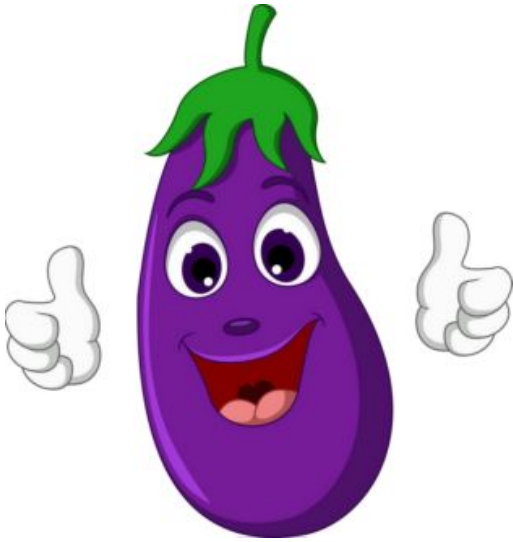
One day, while cutting a tree near a river, his axe slipped out of his hand and fell into the river. The river was so deep, he could not take it on his own. He had only one axe that fell into the river. He started to worry. He will not be able to earn his living now! He was very sad and prayed to the God. He prayed sincerely and God appeared in front of him and asked, "What is the problem, my son?" The woodcutter explained the problem and requested the God to get his axe back.

The God stretched his hand deep into the river and took out a silver axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" The Woodcutter looked at the axe and said "No". So, the God put his hand back deep into the water again and took a golden axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" The woodcutter looked at the axe and said "No". The God said, "Take a look at it again Son, this is a very valuable golden axe. Are you sure, this is not yours?" The woodcutter said, "No, It's not mine. I cannot cut trees with a golden axe. It's not useful to me".

The God smiled and finally put his hand into the water again and took out his iron axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" To this, the woodcutter said, "Yes! This is mine! Thank you!" The God was very impressed with his honesty and she gave him his iron axe and also the other two axes as a reward for his honesty.

Moral: Always be honest. Honesty will always be rewarded.

Tenali Rama and the Brinjal Curry



Tenali Rama was an advisor to the King Krishna Devaraya. He was very clever and spontaneous. Sri Krishna Devaraya had some special type of brinjal plants in his garden. The brinjal was a very rare kind and the curry made out of it was very tasty which was loved by the king. As it was a rare type, the garden was guarded and no one was allowed to see the plants without the king's permission.

Once the emperor arranged an excellent dinner for his advisors and the brinjal curry was served. Tenali Rama enjoyed the brinjal curry very much and went home. But, he was unable to forget the taste. He told his wife about the taste of the curry. Tenali Rama's wife also liked brinjal curry, she asked Tenali Rama to bring home few brinjals, so that she can prepare a curry. But, Tenali Rama knew that the king was taking extreme care about the brinjal plants and he can easily find out even if one brinjal was missing from his garden. And, the king would punish such a thief severely, if he was caught stealing a brinjal from his garden.

But, Tenali's wife pleaded him to bring a brinjal from the garden without telling anyone. Tenali Rama had no choice other than stealing a brinjal from the emperor's garden. One night, he went to the garden, jumped over the wall and plucked few brinjals from the garden. Tenali Rama was happy that no one had seen him. His wife cooked the brinjals and the curry was very tasty. Like all mothers, she too loved her son very much and wanted to serve the brinjal curry to him. But, Tenali Rama asked her not to do such a thing, because if their son revealed to anyone that he had a rare brinjal curry, then they may get caught and get punished for stealing

a brinjal from the garden.

But his wife did not agree. She wanted to serve the curry to her son. She was unable to eat the curry alone without serving her little kid who was sleeping after doing his homework on the roof of their house. She asked Tenali Rama to find a way so that their son can also taste the brinjal curry. Tenali Rama also loved his son, so he thought of an idea. With hesitation, he went to the roof to wake up his child with a bucket of water, and poured the water on the child. When the child woke up, he said "It is raining. Let's go inside the house and have dinner". After going inside the room, he changed the clothes of his son and gave him the rice and brinjal curry for the dinner. Tenali Rama told his wife loudly that "it was raining outside, and let the boy sleep in the room".

Next day, the emperor came to know that few brinjals were missing in his garden. The Gardener who kept the count of each vegetable and flower found that three brinjals were missing. It became a challenging issue for the emperor and so he took it very seriously. He announced a reward for the person who can catch the thief. The gardener told the king that only Tenali Rama was capable of doing such things. The emperor sent a few policemen and asked Tenali Rama to come immediately. Once Tenali Rama came he asked him about the missing brinjals. Then Tenali Rama told, "I was not aware of the missing brinjals". Then the gardener told "Tenali Rama was lying. Let's enquire his son".

The king sent his policemen to bring Tenali Rama's son. Once his son came, the king asked what vegetable he had for dinner last night. The child replied, "The brinjal curry and it was very tasty". Then, the king told Tenali Rama that he must accept his crime. But Tenali Rama said his son slept very early, and he might be saying something which he saw in his dream.

So, the king asked the little kid that "can you please explain clearly what you did yesterday after coming from the school?"

Tenali Rama's son replied that "yesterday after coming from the school, I played for some time and after that, I went on to the roof, did my homework, and slept on the roof. But when the rain started, my father came and woke me up. By that time my dress was fully wet, then

we went inside, had dinner and slept again”.

The gardener was shocked because there was no rain at all yesterday. So, they thought the kid had a dream and allowed Tenali Rama to go without any punishment. However, Tenali Rama told the truth to the king later, and was pardoned by the emperor for his clever witty idea.

Moral: Stealing is not a good virtue! You can always use your brain and come out of difficult situations.

A Fox and a Goat

Once upon a time, a fox was roaming around in the dark. Unfortunately, he fell into a well. He tried his level best to come out, but was not able to come out. So, he had no other alternative but to remain there until the next morning. The next day, a goat came that way. She peeped into the well and saw the fox there. The goat asked, “What are you doing there, Mr. Fox?”

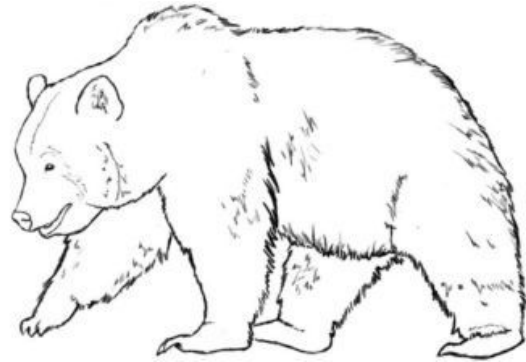
The sly fox replied, “I came here to drink water. It is the best I have ever tasted. Come and drink yourself.” Without thinking even for a while, the goat jumped into the well, quenched her thirst and looked for a way to get out. But just like the fox, she also found herself helpless to come out.

Then the fox said, “I have an idea. You stand on your hind legs. I’ll climb on your head and get out. Then, I shall help you also to come out.” The goat was innocent and did not realise the cunningness of the fox, and so did as the fox said and helped him to get out of the well.

While walking away, the fox said, “Had you been intelligent enough, you would never have jumped in without thinking how to get out.”

Moral: Look before you leap. Do not walk blindly into anything without thinking.

The Bear and the Two Friends



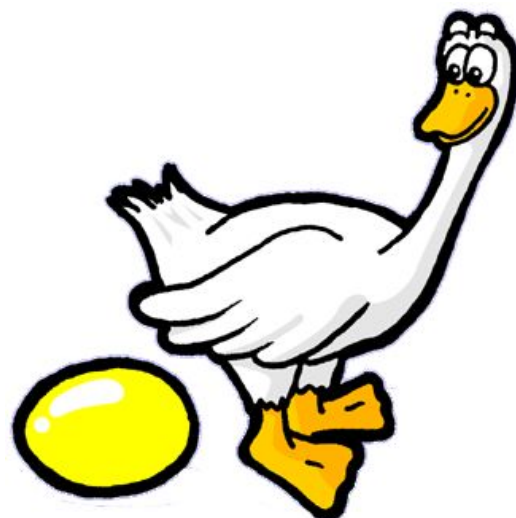
Once upon a time, two friends were walking through the forest. They knew that any danger can happen to them at any time in the forest. So, they promised each other that they would remain united in any case of danger.

Suddenly, they saw a huge bear approaching them. One of the friends at once climbed a nearby tree. But the other one did not know how to climb. So, being led by his common sense, he lay down on the ground breathless, pretending to be a dead man.

The bear came near the man lying on the ground. It smelt him with his nose, and left the place. It is because, bears do not touch dead creatures. Now, the friend on the tree came down and asked his friend on the ground, “Friend, what did the bear tell you in your ears?” The other friend replied, “The bear advised me not to believe a false friend.”

Moral: True Friend is the one who always supports and stands by you in any situation.

The Golden Egg



Once upon a time, there lived a cloth merchant in a village with his wife and two children. They were indeed quite well-off. They had a beautiful hen which laid an egg every day. It was not an ordinary egg, but a golden

egg. But, the man was not satisfied with what he used to get daily. He was a greedy person.

The man wanted to get all the golden eggs from his hen at one single go. So, one day he thought hard and at last came with a plan. He decided to kill the hen and get all the eggs together.

So, the next day when the hen laid a golden egg, the man caught hold of it, took a sharp knife, chopped off its neck and cut its body open. There was nothing but blood all around and there was no trace of any golden egg. He was very sad, because now he would not get even one single golden egg.

His life was going on smoothly with one golden egg a day, but now, he himself made his life miserable. Just because of his greediness, he became very poor.

Moral: One who desires more, loses all. One should remain satisfied with what one gets.

Unity is Strength

Once upon a time, there was a flight of doves that flew in search of food led by their king. One day, after flying for a long distance and they were feeling very tired. The dove king encouraged them to fly a little further. The smallest dove picked up speed and found some rice scattered beneath a banyan tree. So, all of them landed on the ground and began to eat.

Suddenly a net fell over them, and they were all trapped. They saw a hunter was approaching them, and he was carrying a huge club. The doves desperately fluttered their wings trying to get out, but they could not. The king had an idea. He advised all doves to fly up together carrying the net with them. He said that there was strength in unity.

Each dove picked up a portion of the net and together they flew off carrying the net with them. The hunter looked up in astonishment. He tried to follow them, but they were flying high over hills and valleys. They flew to a hill near a city of temples where lived a mouse who could help them. He was a faithful friend of the dove king.

When the mouse heard the loud noise of their approach, he went into hiding. The dove king gently called out to him, and then the mouse was happy to see him. The dove king explained that they were caught in a trap and they needed the help of the mouse to gnaw the

net with his teeth and set them free.

The mouse cut the net and one by one all the doves were free. They all thanked the mouse and flew away together.

Moral: When you work together, you are stronger.

Birbal's Wisdom



One fine day, Akbar lost his ring. When Birbal arrived in the court, Akbar told him "I have lost my ring. My father gave it to me as a gift. Please help me to find it." Birbal said, "Do not worry your Majesty, I will find your ring right now."

He said, "Your Majesty the ring is here in this court itself, it is with one of the people present here. The person who has a straw in his beard has your ring." One man who had the king's ring was shocked and immediately moved his hand over his beard. Birbal noticed this act. He immediately pointed towards the man and said, "Please search this man. He has the king's ring."

Akbar could not understand how Birbal managed to find the ring. Birbal, then told Akbar that a guilty person is always scared.

Moral: A Guilty Conscience needs No Accuser.

Birbal Caught the Thief

Once upon a time, a rich merchant's house was robbed. The merchant suspected that the thief was one of his servants. So, he went to Birbal and mentioned the incident. Birbal went to his house and asked all his servants to assemble, and asked who stole the merchant's things. Everybody denied.

Birbal thought for a moment, and then gave a stick of equal length to all servants of the merchant and said to them that the stick of the real thief will be longer by two inches the next day. He asked all servants to be present there again the next day with their sticks.

All servants went to their homes and gathered again at the same place the next day. Birbal asked them to show him their sticks. One of the servants had his stick shorter by two inches. Birbal said, "This is your thief, merchant."

Later the merchant asked Birbal, "How did you catch him?" Birbal said, "The thief had already cut his stick short by two inches in the night fearing that his stick will be longer by two inches in the morning."

Moral: Truth will always Prevail.

The Fox and the Grapes



One afternoon a fox was walking through the forest and spotted a bunch of grapes hanging from a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," he thought.

Taking a few steps back, the fox jumped and just missed the hanging grapes. Again, the fox took a few paces back and tried to reach them but still failed.

Finally, giving up, the fox turned up his nose and said, "They're probably sour anyway," and proceeded to walk away.

Moral: It's easy to hate what you cannot have. Nothing comes easy without hard work. So, Work Hard and reach your goals.

The Rabbit and the Turtle

One day a rabbit was boasting about how fast he could run. He was laughing at the turtle for being so slow. Much to the rabbit's surprise, the turtle challenged him to a race. The rabbit thought this was a good joke and accepted the challenge. The fox was the umpire of the race. As the race began, the rabbit raced way ahead of the turtle, just like everyone thought.

The rabbit reached the halfway point and he could not see the turtle anywhere. It was very hot. The rabbit felt very tired and so decided to take a break and take a (short) nap. Even if the turtle passed him, he would be able to race to the finish line and run ahead of him. All this time, the turtle kept walking step-by- step. He decided not to quit no matter how hot or tired he was. He just kept going.

However, the rabbit slept longer than he had thought. When he woke up, he could not see the turtle anywhere! He raced at full speed to the finish line but he found the turtle there waiting for him.

Moral: Never underestimate anyone.

Two Frogs



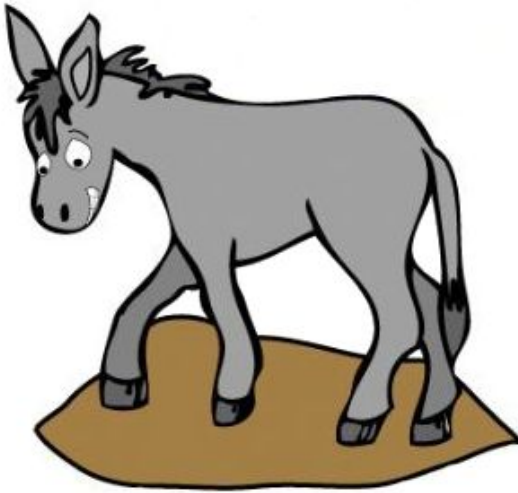
A group of frogs was traveling through the woods and two of them fell into a deep pit. When other frogs saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored their comments and tried to jump out of the pit with all their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, and that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died.

The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally

made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him, the entire time.

Moral: There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them to make it. Also we should do our best and don't mind the discouragement.

Never Give Up



One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old and the well needed to be covered up anyway it just wasn't worth to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbours to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement, he kept quiet.

A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well and was astonished at what he saw. With every shovel of dirt that fell on his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbours continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up.

Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and trotted off!

Moral: Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick is to not to get bogged down by it. We can get out of the deepest wells by not stopping. And by never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up!

Tenali Raman and Two Thieves

One summer night, when Tenali Raman and his wife were about to sleep, he heard a rustling sound of leaves from outside. There was not even a light breeze blowing at that time, so he presumed that there were some thieves hiding in the bushes. He figured out that they must be planning to rob his house in the night.

He thought of a plan and said to his wife, "My dear, I heard that some notorious thieves are hiding in our neighborhood. So, let's hide all the jewellery and money that we have in the well.

A little later, Tenali Raman and his wife came out of the house carrying a big trunk, and dropped it into the well. Then, they went back inside their house, and pretended to be asleep. The thieves waited for a while and then started drawing water from the well.

They wanted to empty the water in the well and get the treasure. The thieves kept drawing out water, the entire night. Towards dawn, they managed to pull out the trunk, and when they opened it, they were extremely shocked and disappointed to see only some big stones in it.

They understood that it was Tenali Raman's plan to outsmart them. Just then, Tenali Raman came out of his house and said, "Thank you friends, for watering my plants. I must pay you for your labour."

Hearing this, the thieves fell at Tenali's feet asking for forgiveness. They promised not to steal or rob anyone ever again. Tenali decided to let them go.

Moral - Keeping cool and using your wit during dire situations can help you to get out of them.

Tenali Raman and the Horse



Once, the King wanted to expand his army. So, he needed more horses. He decided to give one horse to each person in his kingdom to take care of. He also gave everyone a good supply of straw to feed the horse. Everyone except Tenali Rama was not happy with this plan. He shut his horse in one room and everyday at exactly nine o'clock he gave the horse very little straw through the window. He gave the remaining straw to his cows that became fat and healthy.

At the end of a year, the king wanted to see all his horses. All the people who were given horses to take care of brought their horses for inspection. But, Tenali Rama did not bring his horse. On being questioned, he answered that his horse had become so strong that he could not bring it to the court. The king was surprised on hearing this. He said, "Alright, I will send my chief inspector to your house tomorrow morning at nine to inspect the horse there." Tenali agreed.

The next morning, the chief inspector went to Tenali's house. He had a long beard. Tenali took him to the room where the horse was kept and asked him to look through the window. When the inspector peeped through the window, naturally his beard went in through the window first. Seeing the beard, the horse thought that it must be straw that was being given to him at the fixed time. It caught hold of the beard in his teeth and pulled. The inspector shouted in pain and tried to pull his beard back. But the horse knew that this was the only food he would get all day and pulled with all his might till the inspector lost his beard.

The inspector went running to the king. He reported that indeed Tenali Rama's horse was the strongest of them all.

Tenali Raman and the Cat



The country faced a major problem of rats. Rats had multiplied to a very large number and were creating a lot of destruction. They were nibbling through important papers, clothes, grains in food stores, etc. There were not many cats in the kingdom to catch all the rats. So, the king asked all the houses in the country to keep one cat each. But cats feed on milk and not every house owned a cow to get the milk. So, the king also gave a cow to every house. The people were happy and took care of cows and cats. They used to give a lot of milk to their cats.

But Tenali Raman was a lazy fellow and he was also very fond of drinking milk. He wanted to keep the milk from the cow for himself. So, he thought of a clever trick. He boiled the milk and poured it in a pan. Then, he put this pan in front of the cat. As soon as the cat touched the boiling hot milk with its tongue, its tongue got burned and it ran away at once.

Tenali repeated the same thing the next day and again the day after that. After a few days like that, the cat refused to touch the milk that was offered to it for fear of getting its mouth burned. In this way, Tenali got to drink all the milk himself.

One day, the king ordered all the cats to be brought before him for inspection. While all cats were fat and healthy, Tenali's cat looked thin and weak. The king was very angry with Tenali for not taking proper care of the cat. But Tenali pleaded, "Your Majesty, I cannot help it. My cat does not drink any milk at all." The king said, "Nonsense, I will put you in prison for telling a lie." Tenali requested the king to give him a chance to prove it and the king agreed.

So, Tenali brought his cat and the pan of milk in front of the king. He offered milk to the cat. But on seeing the pan of milk, the cat ran away, frightened. The king was surprised at this but he let Tenali go. Tenali lived happily,

drinking a lot of milk by himself.

Who will Bell the Cat



Once, a huge number of mice lived in a grocer's shop. They ate the fresh, tasty wheat, rice, bread, cheese and biscuits that were kept in the shop. They were having a great time and living easy, comfortable lives, growing fatter day-by-day.

But, the grocer was concerned about the loss that he was suffering, because of the damage done to his stock by the mice. So, he thought of a solution and bought a big, fat cat to keep in his shop.

From that day onwards, the cat began to catch the mice every day. The mice were terrified of even stepping out of their holes. They could not reach the food anymore. This was a great cause of worry for them. They decided to call a meeting of all the mice in the shop to discuss this problem.

They got together and started thinking. One of them suggested that they must get rid of the fat cat but no one could think of a way of doing so. So, they kept thinking of other ways. Finally, one mouse spoke up, "We should tie a bell around the cat's neck. That way, whenever the cat is near or is coming in our direction, we would get to know by the ringing of the bell and we can quickly run back to our holes."

This idea was much appreciated by the other mice. They thought that this was the best plan. They began dancing and celebrating with joy. But their celebration did not last very long, for an old and experienced mouse said, "You fools! Stop celebrating and first tell me, who will bell the cat?"

None of the mice had an answer to this question. They

had not thought about this major problem in their plan. This is why it is said that making a plan is one thing but executing it is an entirely different thing.

Blue Jackal



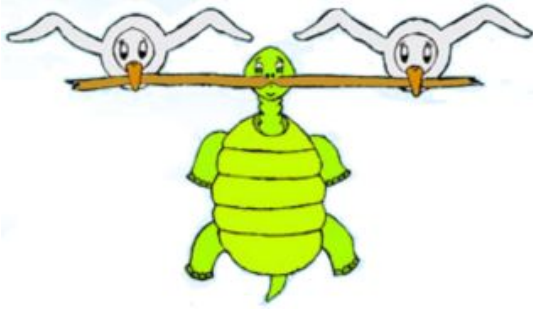
Long ago, there lived a cunning jackal. One day, driven by hunger, he strayed into a village in search of food. On seeing him, a pack of dogs ran after him. Terrified, he dashed into the house of a dye merchant and accidentally fell into a tub of blue dye. The jackal was stained blue from head to toe.

Later, when he got back to the jungle, all the animals stared at him in shock. They had never seen such a strange and beautiful animal before. Seeing everyone confused the jackal thought of an idea. He proclaimed that he was sent to rule over the animal kingdom and guard its animals. The animals believed it and proclaimed him as their king.

The jackal, as their king, then appointed the lion as his advisor, the tiger as his guardian, and the elephant as his doorkeeper. But, his work was not done. For the fear of being recognized, he drove all the jackals out of the forest. The new king, then, ordered his subjects to hunt for him and do his bidding. The animals used to bring all kinds of fruits and meat to him and the blue king lived a life of luxury.

One day, as the blue king was enjoying himself, a pack of jackals passed by and began howling. Unable to control his natural instinct, the blue king rose up and howled to glory. Hearing his cry, the jungle animals realized that they had been fooled. At once, they chased the traitor out of the forest and the cunning jackal never returned again.

The Talkative Tortoise



There once lived three great friends - a pair of geese and a tortoise. One summer, the scorching sun rays dried up their lake, and they decided to leave and look for a new lake.

But the tortoise could not fly, so, the geese thought of an idea, where the tortoise would have to bite on to a stick, which would be carried by the two geese. The only condition was that the tortoise should not open its mouth, or it would meet a terrible fate.

Soon, the geese rose into the sky, with the tortoise holding firmly onto the stick. "Remember! No talking!" said the geese to the tortoise. On witnessing this, animals on the ground started laughing at the unusual sight. "A flying tortoise!" they shouted. Unable to control his anxiety, the tortoise spoke out. "What're you all laughing about? Oh no! I'm falling!" screamed the helpless tortoise.

And so, the poor tortoise came crashing to the ground, only to be saved from death by her thick shell. "If only I would've kept my mouth shut, I would be in a new lake with my friends," thought the tortoise, as she slowly began her journey to find her friends.

The Fox and the Crow

Once upon a time, there was a very clever fox that lived in the forest. One day, the fox was hungry. He really wanted to eat something sweet, like a cookie. Just then, he saw a crow sitting on a branch. The crow had a cream biscuit in his beak which he had snatched away from a little boy. The fox's mouth started watering on seeing the biscuit. He started thinking of a way of getting the biscuit for himself.

The fox said to the crow, "Dear crow, the lion king told me that you sing beautifully. But I have never heard your voice. Will you sing a song for me?" The crow was so pleased on hearing the flattering words of the fox, he

immediately opened his beak and began, "Caw,caw, caw." As soon as the crow opened his beak, the cream biscuit fell down. The cunning fox immediately munched it up and went off.

The next day, the fox came across the crow again. This time, the crow had a piece of cake in his mouth. The fox also wanted that cake. He said, "Dear crow, please forgive me about yesterday. Your song was so sweet and I really wanted to hear the whole song but I spotted a rabbit nearby, so I ran away. Please sing that song for me again." But the crow understood the trick of the fox. He flew off towards his nest with the piece of cake in his beak. After keeping the cake safely in his nest, he returned to where he was sitting and began singing loudly, "Caw, caw, caw." The fox could not bear to listen to the crow's voice and ran away.

Moral: We cannot fool someone every time.

The Stork and the Crab

Once upon a time, there lived a stork by the side of a tank. There were plenty of fish in the tank and the stork always had a full meal. As the years passed, the stork grew old and found it difficult to catch fish for his food. Sometimes, he would be hungry for days.

The stork thought of a plan. He stood by the tank with a sad look on his face. He did not attempt to catch any fish. The fish, frogs and crabs in the tank noticed it, and asked him what the matter was.

"I heard that some humans will soon fill this tank and grow crops over it. There will not be any fish left alive. This makes me feel sad", replied the stork. The fish were worried and asked the stork to help them.

The stork offered to take all of them to a bigger tank some distance away. But since he was old, he would need to rest between trips and would be able to carry only a few fish at a time. Saying this he set out on his first trip taking a few fish in his beak. However, he did not go to another tank. Instead he took them to a bog rock and ate them there. Each time he was hungry he would take a trip with a few more fishes.

A crab was left in the tank. He also wanted to save himself and requested the stork to take him also. The stork felt he could try a different meal for a change. He agreed to take the crab. The stork flew up with him.

After a while, the crab looked down to see the tank where he was going to, but all he could see was dry land.

"Uncle, where is the big tank you are taking me to?" he asked. The stork laughed and pointed to a rock below. There were heaps of fish-bones on the rock. The crab realized that he was going to be the stork's next meal. He thought quickly of a way to save himself. The crab dug his sharp claws into the stork's neck and did not let go till the stork fell down dead. He then cut off the stork's head and dragged it to the tank he lived in. There he told everyone how the stork had been cheating everyone and how he had killed him.

The Four Friends

Long, long ago, there lived three friends in a jungle. They were a deer, a crow and a mouse. They used to share their meals together.

One day, a turtle came to them and said, "I also want to join your company and become your friend. I'm all alone."

"You're most welcome," said the crow. "But, what about your personal safety, there are many hunters around. They visit this jungle regularly. Suppose, a hunter comes, how will you save yourself?"

"That is the reason why I want to join your group," said the turtle

No sooner had they talked about it, a hunter appeared on the scene. Seeing the hunter, the deer darted away; the crow flew in the sky and the mouse ran into a hole. The turtle tried to crawl away fast, but he was caught by the hunter. The hunter tied him up in the net. He was sad to lose the deer. But he thought, it was better to feast on the turtle rather than to go hungry.

The turtle's three friends became much worried to see his friend trapped by the hunter. They sat together to think of some plan to free his friend from the hunter's snare.

The crow, then, flew high up in the sky and spotted the hunter walking along the river bank. As per the plan, the deer ran ahead of the hunter unnoticed and lay on the hunter's path as if dead.

The hunter saw the deer from a distance, lying on the ground. He was very happy to have found it again. "Now I'll have a good feast on it and sell its beautiful skin in

the market," thought the hunter. He put down the turtle on to the ground and ran to pick up the deer.

In the meantime, as planned, the mouse gnawed through the net and freed the turtle. The turtle hurriedly crawled away into the river water.

Unaware of the plot of these friends, the hunter went to fetch the deer for its tasty flesh and beautiful skin. But, what he saw with his mouth wide open was that, when he reached near, the deer suddenly sprang up to its feet and darted away into the jungle. Before he could understand anything, the deer disappeared.

Dejected, the hunter turned back to collect the turtle he had left behind on the ground in the snare. But he was shocked to see the snare lying nibbled at and the turtle missing. For a moment, the hunter thought that he was dreaming. But the damaged snare lying on the ground was proof enough to confirm that he was very much awake and he was compelled to believe that some miracle had taken place.

The hunter got frightened on account of these happenings and ran out of the jungle. The four friends once again started living happily.

The Mice that Ate Balance



Once upon a time, there lived a wealthy merchant, in a village. He ran a big business. His village was situated near a river. Once, due to heavy rain, the river was flooded. One night, the whole village was submerged in neck deep water. The crops, houses and factories in the village were destroyed and hundreds of people and cattle perished in the flood.

The merchant had to suffer heavy losses in his business. He decided to shift to some other town to try his luck. His plan was to earn a lot of money and then come back to his native village to start his business again.

The merchant had a heavy iron balance lying with him.

It belonged to his ancestors. It was not possible for him to carry such a heavy thing along with him. So, before starting on his journey, he decided to keep this ancestral item with his friend Ravi. He met Ravi and requested him, "My friend, as you know, I'm leaving for some distant place to earn money, so that I could start my business once again when I come back. I have an old iron balance with me. Will you please keep it safe with you till I return?"

Ravi readily agreed to his friend's request and said, "Don't worry, I'll keep it safe for you. You can take it back after you return home." The merchant thanked Ravi for his helping attitude. He kept the iron balance with Ravi and left for some other distant town.

A few years passed by. By this time, the merchant had done good business and had earned a lot of money. He returned to his native village, and went to his friend Ravi's house to meet him. Ravi showed his happiness in meeting the merchant. Both the friends talked together for hours. When it was time to leave, the merchant asked his friend to return his iron balance. At this, Ravi looked sad and said, "Friend, I am sorry to say that I don't have your balance with me anymore. There are a lot of mice in my house. They ate up your balance."

The merchant was surprised to hear Ravi's explanation. 'How can mice eat iron,' he thought to himself, but apparently he said something different, "Don't feel sorry, Ravi. The mice have always proved a menace to everyone. Let us forget about it."

"Yes," Ravi said. "This is the only way out." He was happy that the merchant believed his words. In fact he had expected a lot of heated arguments in this respect.

While taking leave from his friend, the merchant said to Ravi, "I'm going to temple to make an offering of laddoos. Could you please send your son with me. I would like to send some laddoos for you also. He would also look after my shoes outside the temple while I offer prayers inside."

Ravi asked his son to go along with the merchant. Then, the merchant, instead of taking Ravi's son to temple, took him to a nearby hill and tied him with a big rock and came back home.

When Ravi didn't see his son return, he asked the merchant where his son was. "I'm sorry," said the merchant. "While your son was looking after my shoes

outside the temple, a big vulture swooped down upon him and carried him away."

"What nonsense!" shouted Ravi. "How can a vulture carry off a young boy?" But the merchant repeatedly claimed that a vulture carried away Ravi's son. The argument reached such a point that they began quarrelling with each other, using dirty words.

Ultimately the matter had to be taken to the court. The Judge listened to both the parties and ordered the merchant to bring Ravi's son to the court, otherwise, he would be sent to jail.

"My Lord", said the merchant, "How can I, when a vulture has already carried away the boy."

"Shut up!" the judge reprimanded the merchant. "How can a bird carry away a young boy?"

"It can, my lord," said the merchant. "If mice can eat my iron balance, why can't a bird carry away a grown up boy." Then he narrated the whole story to the judge.

The judge then asked Ravi to tell the truth. He warned him that if he didn't tell the truth he would be sent to prison. At last, Ravi admitted his guilt. The judge ordered him to return the iron balance to the merchant. He asked the merchant to return the boy to Ravi.

The Bad Elephant



There lived a huge elephant in a dense jungle. He was cruel and arrogant by nature. He roamed freely in the jungle, pulling down small trees and branches. Those animals who lived in the trees were very much afraid of this elephant. When he pulled down the trees and tore off the branches, many-a-nest with eggs and nestlings came down crashing on the ground and got destroyed. His movement in the jungle created an all round havoc. Even the tigers and lions kept themselves at a safe distance from this rogue. In his ruthless march in the

jungle, many holes of the foxes were trampled. This led to dissatisfaction among the foxes and among the other animals alike. Many of them wanted to kill the elephant. But this task was very difficult, because of his huge size.

"He is so huge", said the foxes amongst themselves. "It's nearly impossible to kill him."

Then a meeting of all the foxes was called. In the meeting, the impossible task was assigned to a very cunning fox. The fox, before executing his plan studied the elephant's behaviour for many days.

One day, the fox went to meet the elephant and said to him, "Your Highness. It's urgent to talk to you. It's a matter of life and death for us."

The elephant trumpeted at his highest pitch and asked, "Who're you and why do you want to see me?"

"Your Highness", said the fox. "I'm the representative of the whole of the animal community. We want to make you our supreme head - the king. Kindly accept our offer."

The elephant lifted his trunk with great pride and asked for details.

The fox further explained, "I've come to take you with me. The coronation ceremony will take place in the middle of the jungle, where thousands of animals have already gathered and are chanting holy mantras."

The elephant was very glad to hear this. He had always cherished a dream to become a king. He thought that the coronation ceremony will be a matter of pride to him. He readied himself hurriedly to accompany the fox to the deep jungle.

"Come, Your Highness," said the fox. "Follow me."

The fox led the elephant to some imaginary spot of ceremony. On their way, they had to walk through a swampy area by the side of a pond. The fox being light bodied, crossed the small swampy patch without any difficulty. The elephant too walked on it, but being heavily built, he got stuck in the swamp. The more he tried to come out of the swamp, the more he went deep into it. He became scared and called out the fox, "Dear friend. Please help me. I'm sinking in the mud. What'll happen to my coronation now? Call your other friends also to help me."

"I'm not going to save you", said the fox. "You deserve

this treatment. You know, how cruel you have been to other animals all along. You pulled down branches of trees mercilessly, without caring for the eggs and for the lives of the nestlings. You knew everything, but remained indifferent. You trampled upon the burrows of the foxes. You saw our siblings being crushed under your heavy feet. You saw us crying, begging for mercy; but nothing bothered you. And now you are begging for your life? I am sorry to tell you that though, your coronation couldn't take place, but your cremation will definitely take place." And the fox left.

The elephant couldn't come out of the swamp and died there.

The Well Dispute



Once there was a complaint at King Akbar's court. There were two neighbours who shared their garden. In that garden, there was a well that was possessed by Iqbal Khan. His neighbour, who was a farmer wanted to buy the well for irrigation purpose. Therefore, they signed an agreement between them, after which the farmer owned the well.

Even after selling the well to the farmer, Iqbal continued to fetch water from the well. Angered by this, the farmer had come to get justice from King Akbar. King Akbar asked Iqbal the reason for fetching water from the well even after selling it to the farmer. Iqbal replied that he had sold only the well to the farmer but not the water inside it.

King Akbar wanted Birbal who was present in the court listening to the problem to solve the dispute. Birbal came forward and gave a solution. He said,

"Iqbal, You say that you have sold only the well to the farmer. And you claim that the water is yours. Then how

come you can keep your water inside another person's well without paying rent?"

Iqbal's trickery was countered thus in a tricky way. The farmer got justice and Birbal was fairly rewarded.

Stone Soup

Some travellers came to a village, carrying nothing more than an empty cooking pot. Upon their arrival, the villagers were not willing to share any of their food with the hungry travellers. Then, the travellers went to a stream and filled the pot with water, dropped a large stone in it, and placed it over a fire.

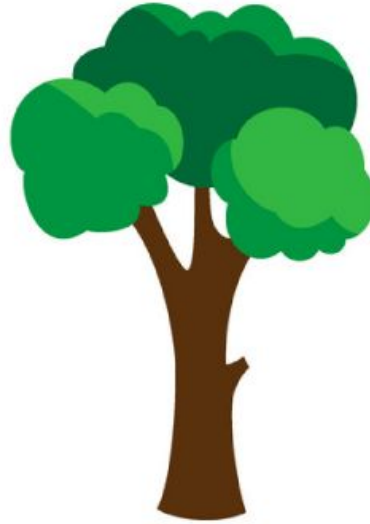
One of the villagers became curious and asked what they were doing. The travellers answered that they were making "stone soup", which tasted wonderful and which they would be delighted to share with the villager, although it still needed a little bit of garnish, which they were missing, to improve the flavour.

The villager, who wanted to get a share of the soup, did not mind parting with a few carrots. So they were added to the soup. Another villager walked by, inquiring about the pot, and the travellers again mentioned their stone soup which had not yet reached its full potential.

The villager handed them a little bit of seasoning. More and more villagers walked by, each adding another ingredient. Finally, the stone (being inedible) was removed from the pot, and a delicious and nourishing pot of soup was enjoyed by the travellers and villagers alike.

Though the travellers tricked the villagers into sharing their food with them, they have successfully transformed it into a tasty and nutritious meal which they shared with the donors.

The Man and the Tree



One day, a man climbed up a tree. While climbing up, he did not realise how tall the tree actually was and kept climbing up. On reaching the top, when the man looked down, he realised that climbing down from the tree would not be as easy as climbing up. He could not think of any way of getting down without injuring himself seriously.

He asked the people who were passing by to help him. But nobody could think of a way of bringing him down safely. Soon, quite a few people gathered around the tree and tried to help the man, but no one knew what to do. The man remained stuck on top of the tree.

Just then, Mulla, who was walking by, saw this scene and wondered what was going on. The people standing around the tree told Mulla about the situation. "Oh!" Mulla said, "I'll get him down in no time." He took a long rope and threw one end of it up to the man telling him to tie the rope around his waist.

Everyone wondered what Mulla's plan was. When one of them asked him, Mulla replied, "Just leave it to me. It's a great plan."

When the man on the tree had tied the rope tightly around his waist, Mulla pulled the rope with all his force. As soon as Mulla did this, the man fell down from the tree and hurt himself badly. The bystanders were shocked at this. They turned to Mulla and asked, "What did you do? What a silly plan you had?"

Mulla replied, "Well, once I did exactly the same thing and saved someone's life." One man asked him, "Is that true?" "Absolutely!" replied Mulla, "The only difference was I saved him from a well and not a tree."

Reading Lessons

Dogs



Do you know that dogs are known as man's best friends? This is because a dog is fun and friendly. Dogs are domestic animals. They have pointed teeth and live for 10-13 years. Dogs love eating bones and they love to play. We can always play 'fetch' games with dogs. They move their tails rapidly whenever they want to play. The baby dogs are called puppies.

Cats



Cats are lazy. They also have whiskers around their nose. They spend 70% of their lives sleeping. But they also spend a lot of time cleaning themselves and remaining tidy. Cats love eating fish and milk. So if cats sneak into your house often, keep your milk and fish safe. Do you know that cats belong to the same family as tigers?

Polar Bears

Polar bears live in very cold areas, covered in snow. They look the same as normal bears, only they are white and bigger. They have a thick layer of fat on their body. It protects them from the cold. Polar bears can weigh equal to 10 humans. They're very strong and powerful. An amazing thing about polar bears is that they look white. But in reality, their skin is black. It is covered with a lot of white fur.

Horses



Horses can almost see in all directions without turning their necks. They run very fast. Horse racing is a very popular sport. Horseshoes are attached under their feet. It helps them run faster. Horses eat grass, hay, grains, and solid food. They're also domesticated on farms. They are useful for different farming activities.

Tigers



Tigers are the largest animals in the cat family. They have vertical strips over their body. They're usually orange, black and white. But some tigers are just white and black. Tiger babies are called cubs. Tigers' eyesights are 6 times better than humans. Do you know that tigers is that they can survive without food for 2 weeks? They are predators, which means that they hunt

their prey. They only eat flesh, which means they're carnivores.

Rabbits



Rabbits love eating carrots and hay. They chew 120 times in a minute. It helps them to digest food easily. Do you know how many times humans should chew their food?

Rabbits have a few things in common with other animals. Just like horses, they can see in almost all directions without turning their heads. Just like cats, they like to keep themselves tidy.

Rabbits live in burrows. They're also called bunnies. Do you know that sometimes rabbits eat their own poop?

Dolphins



Dolphins are very playful and intelligent. Just like whales, they breathe air from a blowhole on their back. They swim very fast. They jump out of the water to breathe and it looks like they're hopping on the water. Dolphin babies are called calves. Dolphins are very attentive even while they're asleep. Some dolphins have two stomachs. This helps them to store food.

Monkeys

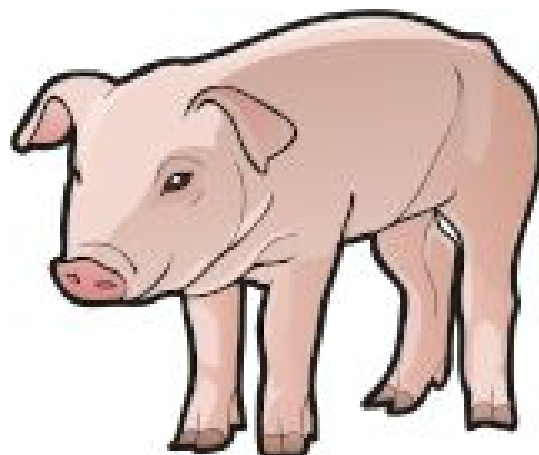


Monkey babies are called 'infants'. Monkeys can be easily seen in India. We usually find them on top of buildings and trees. Their favorite food is bananas. They eat it just like humans, by removing the peels in the same manner. Do you know that monkeys' families are our ancestors? Their hands and legs are very similar to humans. A few years ago, there used to be street plays, in which monkeys danced and did tricks.

Bees

Bees live in beehives where they produce honey. Baby bees are called broods. The beehive consists of a queen bee and worker bees. They feed on flower nectar. The lifespan of worker bees is usually around one year. But the lifespan of an adult queen bee is around 2 to 5 years. Only the worker bees can sting. It is usually advised not to tease the bees. This is because the worker bees can sting us. Stings cause a lot of pain.

Pigs



Pigs have small eyes, large ears, and a flat snout. Snouts give them an excellent sense of smell. They

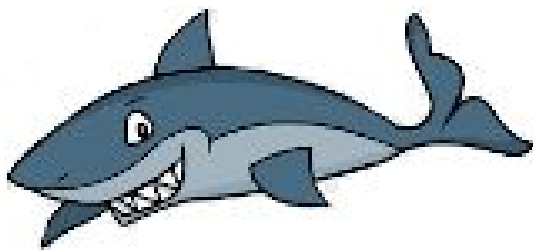
make an 'oink' sound and usually like to stay in mud and dirt. They're one of the most populous mammals. Do you know that the stiff hair on pigs' bodies is called bristles? Those bristles were very commonly used to make paintbrushes and shoe brushes.

Lions



Lions are very powerful and strong. They look like a very big cat with hair all around their face. Lions live together in caves or dens. Baby lions are called cubs. They usually roar at night. The sound of their roar can be heard 8kms away. They eat by hunting their prey, which means they're predators. Do you know that lions can eat up to 30kgs in one meal?

Sharks



Sharks are predators. It means that they hunt other fishes as their food. A baby shark is called a pup. Sharks have an overall 30,000 pointed teeth in their life span. Their skin is the thickest of all the animals. Sharks show their presence by swimming on the upper layer of water. The horn-like fin on their upper body is visible outside the water.

Snakes



A fascinating fact about snakes is that they don't have legs. They move by creeping. They are reptiles. Snake babies are called snakelets. People are generally scared of snakes. This is because they're poisonous. But, not all snakes are poisonous. Their food is usually frogs and small animals. Snakes can swallow their food without chewing. They shed their skin 3 to 6 times per year. Do you know that some snakes can fly?

Dinosaurs

Dinosaurs lived on earth millions of years ago. No one knows what they looked like. But based on bones and skeletons from the past, scientists assumed their body structure. They were of different sizes. Some were very small while some were very huge. Some of them even had wings to fly. Some also lived in the sea.

We still have no idea what sounds dinosaurs used to make. Based on their body sizes, scientists have also assumed their voices. We can hear their voices in a lot of movies made about dinosaurs. For example, the Jurassic Park series, Jurassic World, Godzilla, etc.

Apart from being diverse in their body structures, the species were also different in their eating habits. Some were herbivores, some were carnivores and some were omnivores. It has been found that dinosaurs became extinct about 65 million years ago. A meteor from space hit the earth. It led to the death of the species.

Kids Favourite Cartoons

Shin Chan



My favorite cartoon is Shin-chan. It is a story about a five-year-old boy who is very mischievous. He is always looking for adventure. He is very optimistic about life. He is very fond of Action Kamen, which is his favorite toon. He doesn't like to eat capsicum but his mother forces him to eat it.

Shin chan's mother, Mitsi, is a perfect housewife. She takes care of all the family members. However, she is a little short-tempered. She hits Shin Chan on his head which forms a bulging on his head. She hides some money which she calls her 'secret savings'. She spends them on buying expensive clothes or cosmetics. Shin-chan, by some means, always, finds out where she has hidden her secret savings and then blackmails her that he would tell his dad. She, having no choice, buys him either Action Kamen set or Choco chips.

Shin-chan lives in Japan. He goes to a kindergarten school. He has many friends. His main friends are Kazama and Masao. Shin-chan calls his principal 'Gang Leader' who has a very rough face, like a real gang leader. But he is a good-natured and kind-hearted person.

Shin-chan has a pet dog, Shiro. Shin-chan does not take good care of his dog. He never gives him his morning food. Though he is a naughty boy, everyone likes him very much.

Multiple Choice Question

1. Shin Chan has a pet _____.
a. parrot
b. dog
c. cat
d. rabbit
2. Shin Chan's mother is a _____.
a. teacher
b. housewife
c. doctor
d. principal
3. Shin Chan's mother hits him on his _____.
a. nose
b. cheek
c. hand
d. head
4. Shin Chan does not like _____.
a. capsicum
b. beetroot
c. carrot
d. brinjal
5. Shin Chan lives in _____.
a. China
b. Japan
c. India
d. America

Dora



Dora is my favorite cartoon character. She is a very determined girl and always keeps moving forward to

reach her goal. Dora's adventures are usually about helping others who are in trouble. She has all the tools for her journey in her backpack. She knows how to read the map to reach her destination. 'Boots' is a monkey and it joins Dora in all her journeys. He usually wears nothing but his beloved red boots, hence his name. 'Swiper' is a fox. It wears a blue mask and gloves. It always tries to steal from Dora and others. But Dora doesn't punish the fox and simply shouts 'NO'. The fox respects her and runs away. Benny is another friend of Dora's. He is a big, strong bull with a huge appetite and an even bigger heart. He often tries to help Dora on her adventures, but Benny is so accident-prone that it is usually him in need of Dora's help.

Multiple Choice Question

1. Who has a bad character?
 - a. Boots
 - b. Isa
 - c. Benny
 - d. Swiper
2. Dora always carries a ____
 - a. backpack
 - b. suitcase
 - c. plastic bag
 - d. carry bag
3. Dora uses _____ to reach her destination.
 - a. Backpack
 - b. Mobile
 - c. Boots
 - d. Map
4. Dora's journey usually has _____ steps.
 - a. five
 - b. two
 - c. three
 - d. four

5. Who is a bull?

- a. Benny
- b. Isa
- c. Swiper
- d. Boots

Chhota Bheem



Once upon a time, there was a town named Dholakpur, ruled by a king, Indravarma. There lived a boy named Bheem. He was an intelligent, strong, and witty boy. Bheem always fought for justice and destroyed evil. Bheem was very popular in his town because he helped whoever was in need. Sometimes he even helped the king and received a lot of appreciation from the king and the people. Bheem's best friends were Raju, Jaggu, and Chutki. Jaggu was a monkey and he was very active. Raju was a very naughty and cute boy. Chutki was a very cute and beautiful girl. Kalia was always jealous of Bheem, but Bheem liked him too. Bheem was so good that he always helped Kalia whenever he fell in trouble, and even Kalia didn't forget to help Bheem in return when needed. Dholu and Bholu were identical twins and they were often seen with Kalia. Bheem and his friends always worked as a team to succeed.

Multiple Choice Question

1. Who is jealous of Bheem?
 - a. Dholu
 - b. Kalia
 - c. Bholu
 - d. Chutki

2. Identical twins means, they _____
- have same face and appearance
 - have same weight and height
 - are always helpful
 - are always naughty
3. The king praises Bheem because Bheem _____.
- eats laddoos nicely
 - is a good boy
 - is smart
 - helps the king often
4. Bheem's favourite sweet is _____
- Halwa
 - Barfi
 - Jalebi
 - Laddo
5. Dholu and Bholu are very close to _____.
- King
 - Bheem
 - Kalia
 - Chutki

Small Passages

Picnic

Ravi and Rohit were good friends. They went on a picnic. They took the public bus. In the park, they saw a rabbit. It had a cute pink nose. They saw a squirrel. It was sitting next to a cactus plant. Then, they ate cutlets and wiped their mouths with a napkin.

Math Problem

It was a humid day. Sagar was practicing some basic Math problems. He could add numbers well up to the last unit. But this time he had to do twelve minus five. His father saw his paper and told him to relax. He helped him understand the meaning of minus. Then, he played some music and gave Sagar more problems to practice. Sagar could now do both plus and minus.

Planning for a Picnic

Ria was planning to go on a picnic with her friends. Naman asked her, "What all will you pack?" "I think I will pack a blanket made of good fabric, some snacks, some cold drinks, some games and napkins for everyone," she said. She said she will also pack a jacket because in the evening it gets cold there. Ria and her friends will enjoy it a lot.

Jungle

I was on a trek in the jungle with my family. There were many animals. Suddenly, it got cloudy and windy. The guide had a whistle around his neck to get people's attention. He asked us all to cross the jungle quickly. This caused a bit of a hustle. We ran and ran, and were very quick to get out of the jungle.

Chapati Machine

Neeta was saving some money to buy things for her kitchen. She made a list on paper and went shopping. She saw a beautiful machine there. This machine would cook chapatis on its own. Then, she looked at the label of 500 rupees on it. It was the best thing she had ever seen. She did not wait and bought the machine. Now she can make a lot of chapatis each time there's an occasion.

Spider

Once we were at a hotel. I saw a spider crawling on the broken window. It was very tiny and shiny. Soon, it was near my favorite dress. I saw the spider crawling over it. I tried to stop it but it started crawling faster. I went to protect my dress and just then the spider ran away.

Cat Meeting Tiger

We went to a forest to see wild animals. We were sitting in the car and Judy, our cat was also with us. We were in the middle of the jungle. Suddenly, we saw a giant tiger coming near us. We all were about to shout, but papa told us to be quiet. But Judy was scared so she could not remain quiet. She started shouting "meow, meow!" Hearing this, the giant tiger ran towards us. My father drove the car as fast as he could and got us out of that forest.

Walter and Wallet

I called all my friends and we played basketball. Then, I recalled that Walter has not come at all. We halted and called Walter. He said he couldn't come as he lost his wallet and started crying.

Maya went to Gym

Maya eats bread and drinks milk in the morning. She wears her gym cap. She goes to the gym. The trainer makes her sweat. While in the gym, her sweatshirt tears. She fixes it with thread. Overall, Maya have fun at the gym.

Farm on Table

"This is marvelous", says Mrs. Rita. All students looked up, curious to see the marvelous object. And what did they see? On the table was a glorious model of a farm. It had numerous taps to shower water. It had various crops flourishing. "Who made this?" asked Mrs. Rita. "I did," said Sona. Mrs. Rita encouraged her to come in front. Everyone clapped for Sona.

Small Passages 2

Dolly, my golden fish

Today we will meet Dolly, my golden fish. You will feel happy to see her swim swiftly in her pet jar. My mom presented it for my birthday. I feel so happy to take care of her. I feed her every day in the morning. When I go near the tank, she will swim fast here and there. I know she is happy to see me. My pet knows me. It may be a surprise to you. But, it is true. Come home to see my pet.

Ski, a sapling

So soft to touch! Have you touched the tender leaves of a baby plant? I have touched it. Last week, in the science exhibition, I saw a baby plant. Two little leaves in light green color. The stem looked white and tender. I can see the seed with its seed coat under the leaves. The baby plant swayed in the soft breeze. Hello, baby plant!

One, two, three

Little Vino liked to walk up and down on the steps in her school. When she walked, she always counted one, two, three, till she reached the floor. It made her happy. Hop, hop, and hop. With a smile, she will hop down the steps. Luckily, no one noticed her.

Curve of a moon

A thin curve of the moon looked bright on the night sky. I love watching it from our terrace. My parents are sitting there on the steps and discussing something. I can feel the cool, night breeze. Though it is dark, I am not afraid. The blinking stars in the night sky watch me safely.

Dressing the doll

I always like to dress my doll. When I am alone at home, I have my doll to play with. My doll has so many tiny dresses. Will you believe it if I tell you I made them? I used my toy scissors to cut the cloth. Then, I used bell pins to join them together. I don't know how to use a needle. Every day, I make her wear a new dress. Do you have a doll?

Drops of water

Each time you feel thirsty, grab your water bottle and take a sip. This will make you feel better. Look at the birds in the sky. Where will they go when they feel thirsty? They search for a place with water. Unfortunately, they usually find unhealthy water. Who polluted it? Think! Every living thing in this world has the right to live. Leave a bowl of water on your terrace. Let birds quench their thirst. You will be blessed!

Dews on leaves

Look at the pot of plant near the kitchen window. The leaves are broad and dark green. Little, little drops of water! The water drops reflect prism colours. It is so chilly in the morning! There are dew-drops on the leaves. Can you tell me what colors are there? I can see shades of red and green. What colors do you see?

Sundays are holidays

Every week we have Sunday as our holiday. Why Sunday is so special for me? My father takes me along for his morning walk. We walk briskly to the seashore. It is just ten minutes from my home. I can hear the rolling waves of the sea. It is so good to watch the waves in the morning sun rays.

A Crab tale

It is raining heavily today. I love looking at the rain. Suddenly, I see something crawling in the water on the street. It is a Crab. Crabs are wonderful creatures to watch. I wish I could catch it. But, I am afraid of its pincers. They may hurt me.

Cycle my way

Arun likes to go for a ride in his cycle to the park near his home. Every day, after he comes back from school, he rides with his friends to the park. The park has a separate track for bicycle rides. It is safe to ride in the park. Cycling is a very good exercise. Not only little boys, but even little girls also come there for cycling.

Small Passages 3

Sparrows

Hop, hop, hop! Look at the little sparrows! Sparrows are little angels who bring happiness to our homes. Do you like Sparrows? Every day, a pair of sparrows visit our home and chirp around happily. Chatter, chatter, chatter! Sparrows keep on talking continuously. What do they talk about? Can you guess? Sparrows are not only cute but are also smart, little birds.

How birds fly?

Look at the flock of birds in the sky. What do you see? Some birds fly from one place to another every year. You can see these birds fly in V-shape. Why? It is to save energy. Birds like Canada Geese and Pelicans fly a long distance. The birds in the front flap their wings more times. So that other birds need not flap their wings more. They just glide through the air. Is it not amazing?

Pigeons

Pigeons are wonderful birds. They fly fast from one place to another. Today, if you want to send a message, you do it from your mobile. When kings ruled our country, pigeons were used to send messages from one place to another. Kings used pigeons to send important messages. Pigeons are clever birds. They remember their path of flight. After delivering the message, they used to return to their place.

Stars

Look at the night sky. You can see little spots of light. What are they? They are Stars. Can you count the stars in the sky? No. This is because there are millions of stars are there in the sky. Stars are scattered in the sky. But, do you know, stars also appear in a group? Every group of stars has a name. For centuries, stars guided sailors. In a rough sea, stars are better guides to reach the shore safely.

Moon

There is a full moon in the sky. Milky, white light is cool. It is not hot like sunlight. Some dark spots are there on the moon. What are they? They are known as craters. On a full moon day, you can see the bright moon in the sky. On a new moon day, there is no moon in the sky. The moon grows and wanes. Moon has many tales to tell.

Clouds

Morning sky looks bright in the sunlight. It looks blue and clear. A small fluffy cloud sails across the sky. What are clouds? Clouds are formed from water. Sometimes, the bright sun hides behind those clouds. It will be wonderful if I can sail on the clouds in the sky. Just like we sail on the water, sailing on the clouds will also be thrilling. So, high up in the sky on the cloud. Yes, it is really thrilling...

Little Saran

One day, little Saran crawled fast to the bucket of water near the door. His little hands grabbed the rim of the bucket. After a few slips, he could get up and stand. Saran peeped into the bucket of water. With a giggle, he started playing in the water. Flap, flap, flap, flap, he went on striking the water. Playing in the water is his favorite

pastime. His little hands splashed the water everywhere around the bucket. So cool! How I love to do this! Little Saran giggled and played till his mother gave him a nice slap.

Ant in my hair

Sara always sat near the window in her class. It was a hot afternoon. Everyone was feeling sleepy. The teacher was busy reading from the book. It was like a lullaby to Sara. Oh! What a day to spend like this. A little ant from the desk climbed on her and reached her neck. The little ant didn't want to disturb Sara. But wanted to explore what is around her. In her drowsiness, Sara frowned. She felt something crawling down her nape. Her fingers caught it and it got crushed.

Run fast

The narrow street looked so busy with so many vehicles down the road. Suddenly, a white dog came running fast toward something on the roadside. The moving vehicles stopped for a while. One, two, three, four... Within seconds, dogs were chasing each other. The black dog that followed the white dog did not know what happened. But, he kept on running. Soon, there were so many dogs on the street barking at each other. Until Tara came to chase them away they kept on barking for more than twenty minutes.

Feelers in Insects

The most interesting part in an insect is its feelers. Most of the insects have feelers. The feelers are a pair of sense organs found at the front side of the head of an insect. The feelers have receivers to detect the smell in the air. Insects use their feelers to find the level of moisture in the air. Some flies use their feelers to measure the speed of the air when they are flying. Butterflies use their feelers to find out the direction to fly.

Small Passages 4

Sparrows

After a very long time, I can now hear the happy chirping of little sparrows. We look at those little sparrows with wonder. In the school, we are lucky to

have a closer look at them. Now, we can watch sparrows at our homes also. Every day, a pair of sparrows come to our kitchen window to eat the rice grains my mother leaves for them. They are now so familiar with us that they hop and sit on the iron bar of the window and look inside the kitchen.

Money plant

Money plant is a common indoor plant grown in our homes. A money plant is a climber. It can be grown by planting a twig plucked from the mother plant. Money plant brings wealth and prosperity to our home. Money plant brings in positive energy. It helps to build a healthy relationship at home.

Mint plant

After using the mint leaves for cooking, my mother planted the empty twigs of mint in a pot. Fresh leaves started growing from the twigs after some days. Fresh mint leaves will give flavor to the soups or curries. We can pluck fresh leaves whenever we need them. New leaves grow within a few days.

Basketball

Basketball is a popular sport. People started playing this game hundred years ago. In the year 1891, Dr. James Naismith who was a teacher wanted a new game for his students to play during cold winter. The new game allowed his students to play inside. Players in the game threw a soccer ball into two peach baskets. This made the game be known as basketball.

Cats

Cats have been common pets in the world. Cats are very friendly. Cats are independent and they don't want to stay at home. Cats are human companions for centuries. Cats are attached to their owners just like dogs are. Having a cat at home can be good for your health. Your cat is indeed more like a family than a pet.

Reading Passages

Pure thoughts

Just as a dash of pure light that strikes through the sky, thoughts on purity occupied my mind. The white color

on our flag reminds me once again about the purity that must rule our thoughts, our land, the world and the entire universe. To recollect – Do we breathe in pure air every day? - Do we drink pure water every day? - Do we leave our dear ones pure space to live? The word 'pure' now has a meaning that has grown enormous and it leaves every nook and corner of a human mind with too many questions.

Purity in thoughts, deeds, words, dialogues, workplace, living space, footsteps, and pathways. Purity has become a demanding need of the hour. Everywhere we go we are encountered with something impure. Love for a sophisticated and materialistic life has left us impure. Though we don't do things wantedly, the result glares at us – with our own deeds we have triggered nature's alarm bell. It is time to wake up with broadened shoulders and thoughts to embrace and welcome purity everywhere. Let us not leave behind something impure to make us live pure.

An interpretation

Look at the familiar doll of three wise monkeys. What do they tell us? Don't speak unclean words, don't see unclean situations, don't hear unclean dialogues. Cleanliness is the need of the hour. Every one of us strives our level best to keep ourselves clean, to wear clean clothes, and to live in a clean space. Yet, knowingly or unknowingly we leave the space around us unclean. That is something 100% true.

In today's context, the doll of three wise monkeys impart more significance. The sophisticated lifestyle that we all enjoy prevents us to spare some seconds thinking about the future. For a secure future, we insure our lives. Do we tend to insure and ensure a clean space for our future generation to live a healthy life? Sophisticated machines and technology may make our life comfortable and happy. Yet, think about this – will they assure us and our children a healthy space with pure air to breathe, pure water to drink, and pure food to eat? Unlike loads of money to spend, let us take an oath to give our children a cleaner world to play, live and be happy.

Spinner dolphins

This week, when we went for our usual morning walk at the nearby beach, we were surprised to spot some dolphins. We felt happy to watch the friendly dolphins, which leaped four feet and turned around three times in the air. One of my friends, a marine biologist, told me that they are spinner dolphins. The mammals looked slender with long thin-beak and a distinct stripe connected the long and pointed flippers to the eyes.

Spinner dolphins are commonly found in the tropical and sub-tropical oceans. He also told me that only spinner dolphins can spin several times in the air. They frequently jump high out of the water and spin around like a spinning top. Some scientists believe that the spinning behavior is a way of communicating with the other spinners. It may also show alertness and communicate with the school where they are. This acrobatic jump may also help the spinner dolphins to free their food that can be attached to other large fish.

According to resources, the morning time is the celebration time for the spinner dolphins as they play together. The spinners touch and rub each other and engage in playful games. They swim underneath one another and move their pectoral fins back and forth. Some spinners hold hands with their flippers and caress each other with their tail flukes.

Spinner dolphins may differ in body size, shape, and color patterns. But, in general, they have common characters, namely, slender bodies, long and thin beaks, small flippers pointed at the tips, and appeared in dark gray, light gray, and white colors. Most of these spinner dolphins have white bellies. Spinner dolphins have 45 to 65 pointed teeth. The spinner dolphin feed on small fishes and squids. The female spinners reach sexual maturity at 4 to 7 years and the male spinners reach maturity at 7 to 10 years. The newborn calves measure 80cm in length. The female spinner dolphins nurse their calves from one to two years.

Flowers

The world will not be a beautiful place if it is without flowers. Flowers with their varied colors and perfume convey that life is beautiful. Flowers have the power to make a shabby place look like a place worth living in. A flower can bring cleanliness, beauty, and peace of mind

to the place.

According to Wikipedia, a flower is a reproductive structure, found in plants. The four main parts of a flower are the calyx, corolla, stamen, and pistil. The parts of a flower are arranged in a circular pattern called a whorl. The calyx is the outer whorl of sepals. The calyx is green in color, and in some plants, it looks like a petal. As a collective unit, the sepals form a calyx, and the petals form the Corolla.

The Corolla is the inner whorl of petals. The petals are thin, soft, and colorful to attract insects for pollination. A whorl of stamens consists of a bunch of filaments. Each filament is topped by an anther, in which pollen grains are produced. The pollen contains the male gametes. The pistil is the female part of the flower. The pistil has the carpel, which is the female reproductive organ. The sticky tip of the pistil is called stigma and it receives the pollen grains.

The floral structure of every plant is different from the other. The main parts of a flower are described by its position and not by its function. Surprisingly, all the flowers do not have all the four main parts of a flower. Sometimes, some parts are modified for some specific function. The floral formula is used by botanists to represent the structure of a flower. Specific letters, symbols, and numerals are used to describe the structure of a flower.

Ca – calyx

Co – corolla

A – androecium

G – gynoecium

Many flowers are used as symbols with specific meanings. Red roses are considered symbols of love, beauty, and passion. Daisies are considered symbols of innocence. Lilies are considered symbols for resurrection and life.

Jasmine is also considered a symbol of love. Orchids are symbols of perfection, and sunflowers are considered as a symbol of infatuation. In Hinduism, Lotus is considered a symbol of fertility, purity, and creation.

Pranny and the wild horse

Pranny ran to the school bus with a hop. Her friends greeted her with a loud cheer. One by one, they got into the bus. Luckily, Pranny got the window seat. Pranny always liked to sit by the window. She loved to count the number of trees that the bus cross. Pranny started to count the number of trees when their bus entered the main road. Pranny had finished counting one hundred when they reached their picnic spot. Pranny and her friends jumped down from the bus and entered the park with a scream that can bring down the buildings. Luckily, there were no buildings and the wide sky echoed back. Pranny's teacher asked them to form a line and walk in pairs. Holding the hand of the partner, everyone started to climb up the path on the hill.

Once they reached at the top of the hill, everyone started collecting different types of flowers and leaves as their specimens. After some time, Pranny found out that she had walked away from her friends. Not a bit worried, she started to collect her flowers. Suddenly, she heard the galloping sound of a horse. A wild pony came galloping towards her. Pranny wanted to move away from the horse. So, she started to run. But, instead of running away from the horse, Pranny started to run toward the horse. The shocked pony stopped and looked at her. Then, with a wild cry, the pony turned away from Pranny and climbed down the hill, galloping in speed. It took a while for Pranny to come to her senses. Then, with a cool shake of her shoulders, she started to collect her flowers once again.

Tiny, the cute lizard

The mother lizard slowly climbed the open shelf at the corner of the kitchen, searching for a place to lay her eggs. For the past two days, it hunted for a place where she could keep her eggs. The top corner of the shelf proved to be a safe place. Some bottles filled in the space and hid the corner of the shelf from the view. It would take at least six weeks for the eggs to hatch. Once baby lizards come out of the eggs, they can move freely in no time.

Six weeks later, more than six baby lizards hatched out of the eggs. All the baby lizards followed their mother outside. The mother lizard led them to the nearby tree and started to teach them how to hunt small insects.

The last one hatched, Tiny, did not want to move away from the hiding place in the shelf. The mother went looking for Tiny. The little lizard curled up at the corner of the shelf refused to follow her.

'I am not coming.' Tiny replied to her mother.

'What are you going to do here? You will not get enough food here.'

'It is so warm and cozy here. I don't want to come out and freeze in the cold.' Tiny replied sharply.

'Freezing cold? Who told you so? Come out and see yourself.' The mother lizard called Tiny once again.

'Is it not winter now?'

'Yes, but it is not so cold. If it is cold, we can stay inside the garage. People will chase you away if they find you.' But, Tiny was not in a position to listen to her mother.

At that moment, Bob, the cat entered the kitchen. His sharp nostrils told the presence of the lizard. Without making a noise, he jumped onto the flat slab near the sink. Standing near the sink, he looked around searching for a way to reach the top of the shelf. Meanwhile, the mother lizard has moved halfway on the wall. Sensing danger, she wanted to move fast and escape out of the window. Looking at the cat, she moved her tail fast and let a part of the tail break away. The tiny piece of tail fell on the floor of the kitchen and it started to wriggle as if struggling for life. Bob jumped down and sat down looking at the wriggling tail. Tiny was silently watching all these things. Without making any more comments, she silently followed her mother and went out through the kitchen window.

Millie, an alien

The cool rays of moon peeped in through the gap between the thin strips of coconut leaves. Standing on the terrace, Mini stood staring at the moving clouds in the sky. The clouds were sailing through the sky gracefully. Gazing continuously at the full moon made her feel calm at heart and it also helped her nerves to settle down with a rhythm. Suddenly a ray of light started to descend from the sky. It slowly got dispersed and touched the top of a coconut tree. The coconut leaves slowly moved in the evening breeze and sent the light in every direction. The pale-colored light rays slowly deepened to illuminating green light. It started to come towards Mini.

The dazzling brightness of the light made her eyes blink for a while. The bright light touched her feet. Something moved in the green light and reached her. As if walking through a long corridor, a small doll-like figure walked out of the green light. In the darkness, she could not figure how it looked like.

Mini stooped down to see clearly how the little figure looked like. The first thing that Mini noticed was the strong smell that came from it. The aroma roused and spread all around her. Mini felt to be standing inside a circle of hypnotic power. Her skin started to breathe out tiny drops of sweat and her palms became wet with sweat. She wanted to open her mouth and speak to the little alien-like creature. Her tongue struggled hard to move.

Millie, the alien, looked at Mini. The eyes without any eyebrows looked at her. It sent a vibration throughout her body. A strange feeling went down Mini's spine. While Mini struggled with such a sensation, a chilled spray of water splashed at her face and dribbled down her chin. Mini suddenly came to her senses. The overflowing water from the water tank has helped her to come out of the trance and break the magic spell from the alien. Within seconds the green light started to ascend toward the sky and disappeared from her sight. Mini slowly tried to recollect what happened to her. But, she could not do so. Her memory cells were wiped clean and she kept staring at the wide blue sky.

Neemoo, the little ant

'Joe, come and have your breakfast.' Mary called her nine year old son.

As usual, he is late for school. Running down the stairs, he reached the table. Throwing bread crumbs all around, he finished his morning breakfast.

'Sit down and drink your juice', his mother scolded. Every morning is a struggle with him. Untill he gets into the school bus, the whole place looks like a fighting pit.

Sitting on the chair, Joe started sipping the fresh juice. Near the left corner of the table, a little ant, Neemoo, was passing. Attracted by the bread crumbs that Joe spilled, it moved near to pick up a large piece. Some bits of crumbs stood on the polished shoes of Joe. Neemoo wanted to carry that crumb home. It slowly climbed on his left shoe. When it reached the top of the left shoe,

Joe finished drinking the juice.

'Ma, bye-bye!' Joe started to walk toward the door. Neemoo was shocked by the sudden jerk, and held tightly to the threads of the socks. The bread crumbs fell on the floor, but Neemoo could not climb down the shoe. Breathless, it stayed at the top of the shoe.

When Joe climbed into the bus, Neemoo lost the grip and fell on the last step of the bus. The door of the bus closed and started moving toward the school. Neemoo stretched his feelers to know where he is. Neemoo heard the shrilling scream of little boys and girls. Neemoo moved here and there on the last step of the bus. After walking around a few circles, Neemoo decided to rest at the corner of the step. Neemoo lived in the corner of the dining room at Joe's house. He has never gone out of the dining room. Even if he went out to the window sill, some ants always came along. This is the first time Neemoo is away from home and traveling on the bus.

After the children went to school, someone started to clean the bus. Neemoo did not know what to do. He moved into the corner of the step and stayed there without moving a leg.

Reading Lessons

Miss Fix-it

Ever since she was little, Aruna was curious about how things work. She loved breaking and fixing things to learn more about them. Radios, bicycles, clocks - whatever she could see, Aruna had to open it.

Sometimes, she was able to put the things back together properly. Other times, they did not work when she was finished with them. Aruna's parents would be amused when they found her busy looking at gears, springs, and wires.

They would bring her broken things from they find the neighborhood. She would work on them and fix them. The neighbours began to call her 'Miss Fix-it'. When Aruna got older, she went to an engineering college. Her lifelong love of exploring things helped in her studies. She graduated with excellent grades.

Now, Aruna works as a toy designer. That makes her quite happy. Whenever she has an idea for a new toy, she creates a design and builds a model in her

laboratory. Aruna likes having a job that is fun and makes children happy.

We should also learn from Aruna's curiosity.

The Liberator

Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest Presidents of the United States of America (USA). He removed slavery from his country forever and kept it united.

In those days, the blacks (dark-skinned people from Africa) were treated as slaves by the whites. The people in the North wanted to remove slavery. People in the South wanted to continue owning slaves.

Slaves were bought and sold as property. They lived in very poor conditions. They had no personal or civil rights. The people in the South wanted to have their own country where they could still keep slaves.

Lincoln argued that blacks had the right to life, freedom, and happiness. He did not allow the Southern states to form their own country. As a result, a war was declared between the northern and southern states.

The war lasted for 4 years, and finally, the Northern states won. The country remained united. Slavery was made illegal in the USA. Lincoln issued a proclamation that freed all the slaves in the South.

Lincoln was re-elected as the President. But only six days after the end of the war, Abraham Lincoln was shot dead.

Abraham Lincoln was a great leader. He was honest, hard-working, and a great visionary. He kept the country united. People still remember him and celebrate his life.

Founder of Singapore

Singapore, a small island nation, was ruled by other countries. It got separated from Malaysia and became independent in 1965. Singapore did not have many natural resources. So how did it become one of the world's most powerful countries?

The success of Singapore is due to the efforts of Lee Kuan Yew. He is often called the founding father of Singapore. He became the country's first Prime Minister.

He was in office from 1965 to 1990 i.e. for 25 years.

So what did he do that transformed Singapore into an advanced nation?

Singapore is a port, a place where shipping activities

take place. Lee used this as an advantage. The port was used for many trading activities. He made good policies which attracted foreign countries. He provided housing and employment to his people.

Many people think that Lee's style of working was too controlling. He had strict control over the press. He did not allow much freedom of speech. He took all the decisions and did not allow any corrupt practices.

In an interview, Lee Kuan Yew said, "You are entitled to call me whatever you like, but that doesn't make me one. Do I need to be a dictator when I can win? Hands down!"

He made Singapore a country where there is a system and order. Lee Kuan Yew is rightly called the man who created Singapore. He is considered the architect of modern Singapore. He was a great world leader. He died at the age of 91 in 2015.