

Note: The transactional processes suggested in CISCE curriculum are highlighted in grey.

### Learning Outcomes

- To note the way the kitten gets involved
- To identify the action in the poem
- To familiarise with summarising and interpretation techniques

### Summary

This is a narrative poem, where the poet calls us to observe the activities of a kitten, while she plays with leaves on a wall. She gets busy trying to catch the leaves that fall from the elder tree on a calm morning. The poet compares the kitten to a tiger as she crouches, stretches and leaps on her 'prey', and then to an Indian magician as she gracefully and swiftly catches the leaves.

Simile: "Now she works with three of four, like an Indian conjuror"

Hyperbole: "with a tiger-leap halfway." "gazing thousands"

Imagery: calm and frosty air, stretch, crouch leap of a tiger, feats of art

Rhyme Scheme: aabbccddeeff

### Pre-reading

Elicit answers for these questions from the class and initiate a classroom / group discussion.

Ask students:

*Do you have pets at home?*

*Have you observed your pet? How does it spend the day?* (Encourage students to share their experiences with the class.)

*What do these pets usually do/habits do they have: Dog, Cat, Parrot, Birds, Rabbit, any other animal*

Share experiences and funny stories with the class.

*What are some things a cat does?*

Have students make a list of things cats/ kittens usually do.

### READING

*Students read to predict, comprehend*

Play the audio track. / Read the poem aloud. Explain the poem and question students to check comprehension.

Ask students:

- *See the kitten... bright and fair.*

The speaker narrates the beauty of nature and the simplicity of the kitten as it plays with the withered leaves on the wall in the calm morning air.

Ask students:

*Who is the speaker? Where is the kitten? What is an elder tree? (A tree with sweet smelling*

white or cream-coloured flowers that grow in clusters. Show pictures if possible) *Which part of the day is it? What are the words that rhyme in this stanza?*

- *See the kitten... power again*

The kitten dramatically prepares to catch her 'prey' by crouching and stretching like a tiger. She allows her 'prey' to go and then controls it by catching it again. The speaker compares the kitten to a tiger that catches a prey with all its force.

Ask students:

*What is the kitten doing now? What does the speaker compare her to and why?*

- *Now she works... Tabby care?*

In this stanza, the speaker compares the kitten to a magician as she gracefully and swiftly catches three or four leaves at a time as though performing a magical act on stage. She doesn't appear to be bothered by onlookers as she is focussed on the task at hand.

Ask students:

*What is a Tabby cat? Who does the speaker compare the kitten to in this stanza and why?*

### Post-reading

- Let students recite the poem in groups with appropriate actions and expressions.
- List out all the action words in the poem. Work in pairs and add two more action words for the kitten's actions.

## STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

### The Kitten at Play (Poem)

#### Comprehension

- A.**
1. The kitten is up on the wall. It is playing with the leaves which are falling on the wall from the elder tree.
  2. The speaker describes the day as bright and fair with the air being calm and cold.
  3. The kitten meets her coming prey by crouching, stretching, pawing and then darting towards it. The kitten takes a tiger-leap in the air to catch its prey.
  4. The speaker says that the kitten acts like an Indian conjurer because it completes its action as quickly and as gracefully as an Indian conjurer performs his magic tricks. It catches hold of its prey carefully, lets it go out of its power and then jumps on it. She completes her actions elegantly, just like an Indian conjurer.
- B.**
1. a. The kitten crouches, stretches, paws and darts because through these actions she prepares herself to meet her coming prey.  
b. After this, the kitten prepares itself to take a tiger-leap in the air and finally catches its prey.
  2. a. The kitten is being referred to as 'she' in these lines.  
b. Yes, she is successful in what she does as she catches her coming prey successfully.
- C.**
1. Yes, I think the speaker enjoys observing the cat. This is because the speaker very excitedly asks everyone to watch the kitten in action. Moreover, the speaker gives every detail about the actions of the kitten and says how it doesn't care even when it is seen in action by thousands.

2. (Accept any logical answer) No, I do not think that the little Tabby cares. The kitten catches its prey regularly. It does what it is supposed to do. Therefore, the little Tabby does not care even when it is watched by thousands while it performs its actions.

### **Appreciating the Poem**

#### **A. The list of all the action words in the poem—**

sporting, falling, starts, crouches, stretches, paws, darts, tiger-leap, meets, works, feats, plays, gazing

#### **B. List of rhyming words—**

wall – fall, three – tree, air – fair, starts – darts, way – prey, then – again, four – conjurer, art – part, there – care

#### **Rhyme scheme of the second and third stanzas of the poem—**

aabbcc, aabbcc

### **Vocabulary**

2. spotted leopard      3. bored players      4. relaxed holiday      5. excited students  
6. surprised teacher

### **Going Further**

*Free Response*

## QUESTION BANK

### The Kitten at Play (Poem)

#### A. Answer in brief.

1. Which line from the poem tells us that there was no wind?

**Ans:** The line '*Through the calm and frosty air*' tells us that there was no wind that day and it was a bright morning.

2. Where was the kitten? What was it playing with?

**Ans:** The kitten was on the wall and it was playing with the withered leaves that were falling from the elder tree.

3. How did the kitten play her part and what would she not care about?

**Ans:** The kitten played her part gracefully and she would not care even if thousands of people were staring at her.

#### B. Answer in detail.

1. What does the poet describe in this poem? (The Kitten at Play)

**Ans:** The poet describes how a kitten is all set to pounce on its prey. She is sitting on a wall playing with leaves fallen from the elder tree. Suddenly, the kitten notices its prey and she warms up to catch it. Then she crouches, stretches and runs with a tiger-leap towards the prey. She catches and holds the prey and lets it go for a moment and then catches it again.

#### C. Read the lines and answer the questions.

1. *See the kitten on the wall,  
Sporting with the leaves that fall,  
Withered leaves, one, two and three  
Falling from the elder tree*

- a. Where is the kitten? What is she doing?
- b. Why are the leaves falling?
- c. What do these lines tell you about the kitten?

**Ans:** a. The kitten is on the wall. She is playing with the falling leaves.

b. The leaves are falling because they are old, dry and withered.

c. These lines show the playful nature of the kitten.

2. *Quick as he in feats of art,  
Gracefully she plays her part;  
Yet were gazing thousands there;  
What would little Tabby care?*

- a. Who does the poet mean by 'he' in these lines?

- b. What does the line "*What would little Tabby care*", mean?

**Ans:** a. The poet refers to an Indian magician who entertains his audience with his tricks.

b. It means that the little kitten would not be bothered even if watched by thousands of people.