

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

Learning Outcomes

- To comprehend the poet's woes.
- To identify the literary devices (*simile, rhyme scheme, repetition...*)
- To infer that it is imperative to be a part of Nature's cycle

Summary

The poet describes the process of gathering leaves as a part of the harvest which is of no use to him. The whole process of gathering leaves is tiresome. At the end, the speaker is left with nothing but a shed full of dull, weightless leaves. Yet, the speaker knows that gathering leaves cannot be avoided because harvest is an endless process—leaves represent a natural cycle. They are signs of life in spring and keep the tree alive throughout the warmer months and once they have done what they need to do, fall and nourish the earth.

Rhyme scheme: abcb

Simile: light as balloons; like rabbit and deer;

Contrast: balloons and mountains: one is full of air and weightless while the other is heavy and rock solid

Hyperbole: The speaker is working so hard that he thinks he is creating mountains

Repetition : leaves; again; next to nothing

Pre-reading

Discuss the seasons. Take it further by talking about the seasons experienced in the western countries (spring, summer,

fall (autumn) and winter) and how trees shed all the leaves in autumn to get ready for winter.

READING

Play the poem on the screen, in parts. / Read the poem in parts. Pause to explain / discuss / check comprehension.

- *Spades take ...into my face.*

The spades used for gathering leaves are hardly helping, because at any given time, they are able to scoop just spoonfuls of leaves. Also, the bags full of leaves weigh

nothing, yet it takes a long process to get the leaves into the bags.

The task is hard because the leaves keep falling off his arms and flying into his face.

Ask students:

Is the speaker enjoying the task? Why does he compare the spades to spoons? (The spade

rakes in just as many leaves as a mere spoon would do because the leaves keep flying away making the process slow and tiresome.) *What is compared to the rustling of leaves?*

- *I may load...shall stop?*

The process does not leave the speaker with a sense of accomplishment. Instead, he is left with a worthless, weightless and dull load of leaves. Yet, the speaker must carry on with the task because there is no escaping the process as this a cycle of nature.

Furthermore, with the leaves being uncooperative, the end of this process does not leave the speaker with any sense of accomplishment or happiness. He is left with “nothing for weight” and “nothing for color”. Gathering the leaves gives him nothing.

Let students answer the questions with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

- *Is the speaker enjoying his task?*
- *Are the leaves bright and colourful?*
- *Is the load heavy to carry into the shed?*
- *The task is tiresome, will he stop doing this?*

Ask students:

What are the words that rhyme in each stanza? (Here, make sure that students do not match ‘raise’ with ‘embrace’ and ‘face’; ‘raise’ ends with a ‘z’ sound while the other two do not.

What do the words ‘again and again’ signify? (that it is tiresome job)

Post-reading

Let students work in groups and prepare a chart with pictures of trees with colourful leaves and path ways covered with the leaves, as seen during autumn.

STUDENTS’ BOOK ANSWER KEY

Gathering Leaves

Comprehension

- A. 1. The speaker is gathering leaves that have fallen down to the ground, with his spade.
Yes, the speaker works all day.
These lines show how long the speaker works:
“I make a great noise
Of rustling all day”
The ‘rustling’ noise is caused by the speaker gathering leaves.
2. The speaker keeps the leaves that he has loaded in a shed.
3. The leaves lose their colour and grow duller after they fall to the earth because they mix with the earth.
- B. 1. a. The mountains that the speaker raises are made of the leaves that have fallen to the ground. The leaves are piled up by the speaker which makes them look like mountains.
b. The speaker is not able to embrace these mountains because they are made of leaves. These leaves scatter everywhere when the speaker tries to gather them in his arms.

c. No, the mountains are not heavy.

These lines from the poem show that the piles of leaves are light:

“And bags full of leaves

Are light as balloons.”

or

“Next to nothing for weight”

2. a. The crop gathered by the speaker is not colourful and has a dull colour.

b. No, the crop gathered by the speaker is not useful.

This line from the poem shows that the crop is not useful is:

“Next to nothing for use”

C. 1. (Suggested answer, please accept any logical response)

No, the speaker does not like gathering leaves.

The speaker does not like gathering leaves because even the spade cannot gather many leaves at once and this makes the work slow. The speaker has to work the whole day to gather the leaves because there are so many leaves and he cannot pick them up quickly. After the speaker has finished his work, the leaves that he has gathered are neither useful nor colourful. The leaves lose colour after falling to the earth and only become duller with more time. The speaker dislikes his work for all these reasons.

2. (Suggested answer, please accept any logical response)

The speaker has to gather the leaves to clean his garden or backyard. The work is not pleasant but has to be done to keep the ground clean. Some tasks like gathering leaves or cleaning our room have to be done again and again but are an important part of life.

Appreciating the Poem

What	Compared to	Why
spades	<u>spoons</u>	because there are many leaves to gather
<u>bags full of leaves</u>	balloons	because the leaves are very light
piles of leaves	mountains	<u>they are piled up high and fill the whole shed</u>

Vocabulary

1. elude 2. duller 3. harvest 4. crop 5. embrace 6. rustle

Going further

Free response

QUESTION BANK

Gathering Leaves

A. Answer in brief.

1. What does the speaker do with the leaves? How is he able to carry them by himself?

Ans. The speaker rakes up the leaves with his spade and fills the bags. He is able to carry them on his own because they are as light as balloons.

2. What does he find difficult in the whole process of gathering leaves?

Ans. He rakes all the leaves and gathers them into mountainous heaps but when he wants to collect them and fill the bags, they escape his embrace and fly all over.

B. Answer in detail. (Think and answer)

What does the poet mean by the last two lines in the poem 'Gathering Leaves'?

Ans. The speaker says that gathering leaves is something that he has to do because harvest is an endless process and leaves are a part of a natural cycle. They are signs of life and keep the tree alive throughout the warmer months and in winter, they fall to the ground and wait to be gathered and disposed, making man a part of this endless cycle.

C. Choose the right answer.

The speaker says that raking of leaves

- a. should be stopped once and for all.
- b. is something that cannot be stopped.
- c. is like harvesting crops.

Ans. b

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

Spades take up leaves

No better than spoons

- a. What does the speaker compare the spades to?
- b. Why does he compare?
- c. What does he do after collecting the leaves?

Ans. a. He compares the spades to spoons. b. He compares to let the readers know that the spades are able to collect the leaves only just as much as spoons would do. c. He fills the bags and loads them in the shed.