

THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER POEM

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

Learning outcomes

- To instil the notion that even in difficult times we must be hopeful and courageous and not lose faith
- To appreciate the poem by anticipating the story
- To familiarise with summarising techniques

Summary

This poem is a touching reminder that we should have faith and be hopeful and optimistic even in times of trouble. The message of the poem is beautifully conveyed through the words of a little girl who reminds us that God is everywhere.

Pre-reading

Have a classroom discussion on what a sailor's life would be like.

Ask students:

- What do you think he would like about the sea?
- What are the risks of his job? What are his fears about the sea?

- Have you been in a storm/ a natural calamity or a disaster?
- How did you cope with it?
- What were your fears? How did you feel?
- Name some people you are proud about. How have they inspired/influenced you?

Have students fill up the first two columns of the anticipation guide:

	Agree	Disagree	Were you right? Reflect
A Brave person... is strong and tall			
A Brave person... faces difficult situations without fear			
A Brave person... is always pessimistic (negative)			
A Brave person... is born brave			
A Brave person... encourages others to face their fears			
A Brave person... is always scared			
A Brave person... stands up for others			
A Brave person... cannot be physically weak			
Everyone is capable of courage			
Courage means doing the right thing even when it is the difficult thing			

READING

Students predict, anticipate and paraphrase

A. Group work

Tell students to look at the picture in the Reader.

Ask students:

1. What is the setting of the poem?
2. Who do you think are in the ship?

Write the title on the board.

Tell students to predict the story: (*Allow some time for the predictions*)

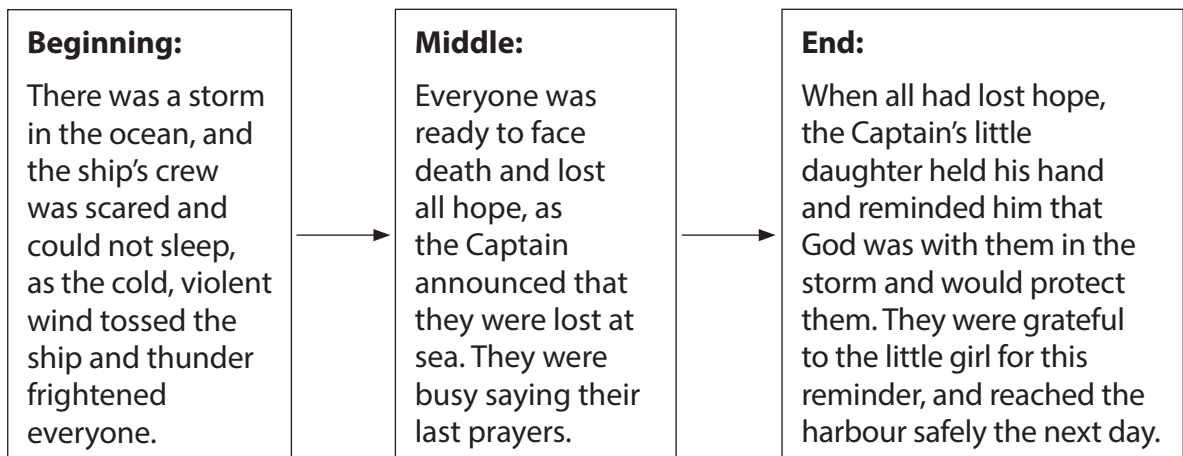
- B. Discuss this vocabulary with the students (*help students understand the meaning of each of these words*)

blast	mast	rattling
trumpet	thunder	shuddered
beakers	harbour	staggered
maiden	anchored	stoutest

Play the audio on the Smart Book once, and let the class listen to the poem. Instruct them to pay attention to the pronunciation, stress and rhythm.

- C. Write the words *Beginning*, *Middle*, and *End* on the board.

Tell the class that this poem has a beginning, middle and an end and that they will have to identify the episodes and fill the details below these headings in the correct order. (*Note: Do not write the given answers. Fill in the details as the students share their answers.*)



Divide the class into six groups. Let the class recite the poem aloud group-wise. Pause after each stanza to check comprehension/discuss the content.

Guide each group to write the summary of every stanza.

- *We were crowded... on the deep.*

Everyone on the ship was crammed up in a cabin, all scared to sleep; as it was midnight, and there was a huge storm in the ocean.

- *'Tis a fearful ... "Cut away the mast!"*

It was terrible to experience the strong gust of the cold and harsh winter's winds on the ship. Thunder is personified here, (*Note: Tell students that sometimes objects are given qualities of human beings.*) and is shown as a loud thundering voice commanding the wind to cut off the mast. (*Note: the mast holds the sail, and without the mast the ship is sure to sink*)

- *So we shuddered ... talked with Death.*

Everyone on the ship was shaking in fear as they knew the ship was about to sink and they were going to die. Even the bravest heart feared death as the sea seemed to want to devour them with her rough deadly waves.

- *As thus ... staggered down the stairs.*

Everyone is sitting in the dark in the ship as the storm rages at sea. Even the captain gives up and announces sadly that the ship is lost.

- *But his little daughter ... Just the same as on the land?"*

When all had lost hope, the Captain's little daughter held his hand and reminded him that God was with them in the storm and would protect them, as God was present both on land and on the sea.

- *Then we kissed ... shining clear.*

Everyone on the ship kisses the little girl, as a way of thanking her for her innocent words and being the ray of hope when everyone had given up. The ship reaches the harbour safely in the morning.

D. What **poetic devices** can you identify in the poem?

Personification has been used in several places.

Tell students to highlight the lines showing personification.

Rhyme scheme: *abcb* with six stanzas of four lines each.

Post-reading

Have students work in small groups to role play situations in which a person shows courage. Write possible scenarios on the board and ask each group to choose a situation. Allow each group to perform their skit for the rest of the class. Remind students to be respectful while others are performing.

OR

Tell students to think of a person / people who have been an inspiration in the world. (Example: Abdul Kalam, Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi). You can also focus on children who have made a huge difference in the world (Example: Malala Yousafzai).

Have them make collages about the lives of these people and how they have impacted the society in a positive way.

STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

Comprehension

1. The captain said these words.

While the crew was sitting in the cabin, the captain had gone up to see how things were. Seeing the fierceness of the storm and how it was tossing the ship around, he felt that the ship would break and capsize any moment. So, feeling hopeless and defeated, he said these words.

The listeners felt even more scared and hopeless after hearing the captain's words.

2. The captain's daughter said these words.

She meant that just as God listened to everyone's prayers when they were on land and helped them overcome their problems or protected them from danger, He would also listen to their prayers and help them when they were in trouble at sea.

The little girl's words filled the crew with hope. Their faith in the Almighty was restored and they were able to find the courage to face their troubles. They gratefully kissed the girl for reminding them to have faith in the Almighty and began to feel more optimistic and positive.

B.

1. No one dared to sleep as a fierce storm was raging and everyone was scared that the ship would sink any moment and they would drown and die. They preferred to stay awake and be alert should such a thing happen.
2. The ship was damaged in the storm. It was shattered by a strong gust of wind and a loud thunder rattled the ship and broke the mast. The lines, "To be shattered by the blast" and "Cut away the mast!" tell us this.
3.
 - a. In the first and second stanzas, we get to how scared the crew were as they huddled together in a cabin as a fierce storm raged outside.
 - b. In the third and fourth stanzas, we get to know how the crew trembled in fear and even the bravest of them hardly dared to breathe as the sea roared around them and the waves loudly broke on the shore. They sat silently praying but without any faith or courage. The captain of the ship, who had probably gone up and seen how the ship was being battered in the storm, felt hopeless and defeated and declared that all was lost. This made the crew feel even more dejected.
 - c. In the fifth and sixth stanzas, crew were inspired by the captain's little daughter's innocent but firm faith in the Almighty and began to feel hopeful and optimistic.

C.

1. In the first two stanzas, the sea is described as 'hungry' because the waves are so high and rough that it seemed as if the waves would swallow the ship.
2. The message of the poem is that in times of great trouble, when it seems that all is lost, we must have faith in the Almighty.

Appreciating the poem

"And to hear the rattling trumpet Thunder, / Cut away the mast!" In these lines, thunder has been described as a living thing that is shouting in a terrifying voice and telling the wind to cut away the mast. This conveys to the reader how powerful the storm is.

"While the hungry sea was roaring / And the breakers talked with Death". In these lines, the sea has been portrayed as a hungry, roaring creature. The waves and death have also been personified as beings that are talking to each other. By doing so, the poet creates very vivid images and also adds drama to the poem.

Vocabulary

1. crowded
2. dare
3. fearful
4. shattered
5. cheer

Going further

Free response.

QUESTION BANK

A. Answer in brief.

1. What situation did the captain and his men find themselves in?

Ans: The crew was caught in a storm at sea and everyone was nervous about what awaited them. None of them could sleep and at midnight the crew huddled together silently. They did not know how to escape from the situation they found themselves in.

B. Answer in detail.

1. How did the crew of the ship feel when caught in the severe storm at sea?

Ans: The crew gathered together in the cabin. They did not sleep through the night because they were terrified of the storm. It was a fearful experience for them to be stuck in the middle of the sea shattered by the heavy wind, rain and thunder. Even the bravest of them shuddered, silently holding his breath as they watched the waves break. Everyone felt as if there was death looming large all around them. They all sat in silence, praying every moment and the captain was almost sure that they were all going to die.

C. Choose the correct answer.

We were crowded in the cabin,

Not a soul would dare to sleep,

Why did they not dare to sleep?

- The crew kept awake so that they could help the captain.
- The crew knew that if they kept awake, they would not die.
- The crew were afraid that they were going to die.

Ans: c

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

1. *So we shuddered there in silence, -
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring
And the breakers talked with Death.*

- Who are we?
- Why were they in silence?
- What did they fear?

Ans: a. 'We' refers to the sea men whose ship was stranded in the middle of the sea because of a storm.

b. They were in silence because they were all afraid of the consequences of the storm at sea.

c. They feared that they would all be washed away and die in the severe storm which shattered their ship.

E. Answer in detail. (Think and answer)

How did the little girl prove to be their saviour?

Ans: In the stormy sea with their ship shattered, all were frightened of what fate had in store for them. Everyone felt that they were doomed and that anytime they would die. They were so afraid that they were not even able to concentrate on their prayers. It was at that moment that the captain's little daughter held his icy hands and told him to trust in the power of God. She made them understand that whether on land or in the sea, God was the same and he would protect His children everywhere. This renewed confidence made them pray with trust and, like a miracle, the storm cleared. In the morning there was sunshine, giving them a fresh breath of life.