

## THE LUMBER ROOM

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

### Learning Outcomes

- To note the relationship between those in power and those subjected to power
- To appreciate the cleverness and tact of a mischievous boy
- To infer the relationship between two different generations



### Pre-reading

This section focuses on *assessment for learning* as it indicates to the reader what is to follow.

#### Pair work

A. Guide students to do the Pre-reading section in the Reader.

#### B. Pair work

1. Recollect two occasions you have been caught doing mischief at home?
2. Who found out what mischief you did?
3. Were you punished? What was the punishment?
4. Have you ever been unfairly punished?

Give some time to discuss. Let a few students share their experiences.

## READING

*Students analyse the situation and characters, and relate to situations*

Ask students to read the text in parts. / Pause to discuss / check comprehension.

- *The children were going ... and he was to stay at home.*

*Why was Nicholas kept indoors all day while the other children went to the beach along with his siblings? Why do you think Nicolas put a frog in his own breakfast? Why was he really punished, though there was actually a frog in his breakfast? (For refusing to eat his food, not for putting a frog in his breakfast)*

*Why does Nicholas repeat this? What do you think he wants to hear from the adults?*

This question focuses on *assessment for learning* as it glimpses into the character of Nicholas and indicates that the story revolves around him.

(Ans: Nicholas repeated himself because he wanted to prove that he was right in saying there was indeed a frog in his breakfast. He wanted to hear the adults admit they were wrong when they said that he lied about the frog.)

- *His aunt, who was staying back with him ... gooseberry garden was not half as exciting.*



Why did his aunt think that he would feel sorry and cry when the others left for the picnic? What was his reaction? Why did his aunt sternly tell him not to go into the gooseberry garden? According to you, was the punishment fair? What does the writer convey here? (The writer makes it clear that the tricks done by Nicholas are harmless.) His aunt 'kept a close watch on the two doors that led to the forbidden garden'. Why did she do this? What was the forbidden garden? What was his plan? (He was trying to distract his aunt so that he would get her out of the way and steal the key that unlocks the lumber-room of the house, and gain access to that forbidden chamber of secrets.) Was he able to outwit his aunt? (Yes, Nicholas was able to outwit his aunt and gained access to the lumber-room with its hidden treasures and curiosities.)



What makes a place exciting to you?  
(Free response)

This question focuses on *assessment for learning* as it opens a student's imagination to a world they would love to explore. It also prepares the reader for the treasures to be found in the lumber room.

- The lumber-room was a storehouse...the aunt from the rain-water tank.

Why was the lumber room 'a storehouse of treasures'? (For the children, it was a forbidden room with its hidden treasures and curiosities) What catches his eye in the lumber room? While admiring the objects in the lumber room and firing his imagination, what happens outside? How does Nicholas manage to escape helping his aunt?



Do you think Nicholas' aunt can really see him? (Ans: No)

This question focuses on *assessment for learning*. It draws the reader to get involved in the plot of the story and look forward to what is to come.

When Nicholas says that his Aunt often tells him that the Evil One tempts him and that

he always gives in, does he really mean it? What was he trying to do? (He was using her teachings to his advantage.) Does Nicholas know that it was his aunt stuck in the water tank? How does he try to test her?



Why does Nicholas sound gleeful here?

This question focuses on *assessment for learning*. Readers become more involved in the plot as they become aware of certain facts which Nicholas' Aunt is not.

(Ans: Nicholas sounds gleeful here because he has caught his aunt's lie and he also managed to find an excuse to not have to rescue her.)

- Tea that evening was taken... while the wolves feasted on the stag?

Has the purpose of the punishment been realised? (No, Nicholas ends up having an extraordinarily happy day at home, plotting his way into the forbidden lumber room, a mysterious locked room that only the adults are allowed to enter.) What was his aunt's reaction in the end? (His aunt is upset by the events of the day and maintains silence as though she is the one who has suffered undignified and unmerited punishment.)



Who is enjoying their evening tea the most? How do we know this?

This question focuses on *assessment for learning*. Readers now get an overall view of all that has happened, while Nicholas' aunt is still left in the dark.

(Ans: Nicholas is enjoying his tea the most. While the others are sulking because of their terrible day, Nicholas is daydreaming about the tapestry and thinking about imaginary adventures.)

What was Nicholas' reaction? (He does not gloat over his victory nor is he jubilant about his aunt's sadness. He has already moved on to thinking about the interesting tapestry he discovered in the lumber room.)

## Post-reading

### Group discussion

1. Was Nicholas treated fairly? Give reasons.
2. Who received punishment in the end – Nicholas or his aunt? Support your answer.

Let each group discuss one question. Allow them to share with the entire class.

Suggested points for discussion:

1. He was treated unfairly as an outing should not have been denied for a young

child because of his mischief. He could have been given different punishment. His mischief was innocent. (Accept any answer contrary to this provided it is supported by the text.)

2. His aunt seemed to have actually received the punishment; she was seen sulking, while he was already in his own dream-world about things he saw in the lumber-room. (Accept any answer contrary to this provided it is supported by the text.)

## GRAMMAR

## The Present Perfect and the Simple Present tense

### Present simple and present time

Revise the present tense.

We use the present simple to talk about:

- something that is **true** in the present: *I **am** eleven years old.*
- something that **happens regularly** in the present: *I **swim** every Monday.*
- something that is always true: *The sun **rises** in the east.*

### The present perfect tense

Write these instructions on the board:

#### Activity

Find someone who has

*... seen a bear, ... been to Singapore, ... eaten green mangoes, ... never watched a movie in a foreign language.*

Add more to the list. Divide the class into large groups. Allow the students to move to the other groups to find out someone who fits into any category. They must write the name of the student next to it. Select the student who has the maximum number of names in their list. Ask them to share the findings.

Write down the sentences on the board. Example: *Anirudh has been to Singapore.* Ask Anirudh how many times he has been to Singapore. (*I have been to Singapore twice.*) When did you go to Singapore? (*I went in ... and ...*)

Ask students to find out a classmate who has lived longest in your city. If you happen to find more than one student fitting into the category, you may step in.

*I have lived in ... for 10 years / since 2000.* Ask them the following questions:

*Am I talking about now? / Am I talking about the past? / Am I talking about now and the past? / Did the action start in the past? / Is it continuing now?* Give them some time to think before they answer. Tell them we use **present perfect** to talk about events that **started in the past and continue up to now.**

Call two students and instruct them to mime the following actions. You may call out the day/time.

Scene 1: Day 1 (Monday) Two students are riding a bicycle. They fall down from the bicycle and are hurt.

Scene 2: Day 2 (Tuesday) They are seen lying at home with a broken leg each.

Now ask the class:

*When did the accident happen? (In the past) / Can they walk now? (No) / Why can't they walk now? Can you see the result of the accident which happened in the past?*

Explain that we use **the present perfect to talk about an action in the past which is connected to present time.**

Example: *The floor has been swept clean.* (The floor was swept earlier and is still clean)

## VOCABULARY

## Prefix to form antonyms

**Prefix to form antonyms –un-, in-, il-, dis-**

Follow the inputs given in the Reader.

## LISTENING

## Post-listening

Tell students that they will be listening to a poem, *Lions Running Over the Green*. Point out that it is a post-listening task.

Play the audio track once and let students answer the given questions. Play it once again so that students check their work / complete their work.

Review the answers.

## SPEAKING

## Expressing certainty and uncertainty

This task can be used for *assessment as learning* as students communicate using the sentences clearly expressing certainty and uncertainty.

Explain to the class that:

- Certainty is the state of being completely confident about something or having no doubt about something.
- Uncertainty is the state of being unsure about something.

Talk to the class about how one can express certainty or uncertainty while conversing.

*Pair work*

Write the following sentence on the board and ask students to work in pairs and write a few complete sentences expressing certainty and uncertainty.

*Will Nina win the competition?*



I'm sure she will...

No, I'm not sure about that

I'm quite certain that...

I don't think so

Definitely

It's most unlikely that

Let students share with the class.

Instruct one student to ask a question and the other answers. They can reverse roles.

Guide students to

- use the correct intonation.
- speak softly without raising their voices. Point out that this is not an argument.



## WRITING

## Article

This task can be used for *assessment as learning*.

- Allow students to discuss the question, in groups and bring out points expressing ways to make your vacation fun and interesting.
- Let students use the points given in the Reader for the discussion.
- Encourage each individual to write their own article.

*Note:* Help students set their objectives (*Why do I want to write this?*)

Guide students through every step. Share the sample passage and guidelines with them but encourage them to write their own composition.

### Article

*What is an article?*

An article is a non-fiction text on items of general interest or specific topics.

**Introduction:** The first paragraph of an article presents an overview of the article.

**Body:** This is followed by the body, comprising a few paragraphs. This section takes it further and provides more information on the topic.

**Conclusion:** This is the last section and it sums up the main points.

*How do I write an article?*

### Paragraph 1

*General:* Write down the main idea you are going to expand in the article. Write in a semi-informal, conversational style. Make sure you organise your ideas well.

Everything you write in the article should provide information about the central idea. If you choose to write about a clean environment write a general paragraph to introduce the main idea.

*I love taking walks in the park with my grandparents every morning. I love it all the more because it is clean, green and beautiful. We need a clean environment so we can live healthy lives and leave future generations a healthy Earth to live in...*

## Paragraph 2

*Specific:* Expand on the idea.

Write details of how we can keep our environment clean and beautiful.

*The simpler our life the more we can contribute to a clean environment. One way to do this is to use what we have and not buy things that we really do not need. That will help create less waste that has to go into our already full landfills. The less waste we all create, the better our environment will be. Another way to contribute to a clean environment is to buy reusable shopping bags for all our shopping needs and avoid using plastic bags that just get thrown away and clog the Earth. Plastic bags are bad for the environment.*

*We can donate unused items to someone who can use them, instead of throwing them away...*

## Paragraph 3

*General:* Summarise what you have said earlier.

*Conducting cleanliness drives regularly will help create awareness. It is easy to take steps to create a clean environment. If everyone makes a few small changes, it will have a big impact on our environment. We all need to be focussed on creating a clean environment...*

## STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

### The Lumber Room

#### Pre-reading

*Free response*

#### Comprehension

- A.
1. Nicholas was in disgrace because he put a frog in his breakfast.
  2. His aunt punished him by not allowing him to go the beach with the others.
  3. Nicholas wanted his aunt to believe that he wanted to go to the gooseberry garden so that she would keep an eye out for him there. This would ensure that she wouldn't be anywhere near the lumber room, which is where he wanted to go.
  4. The lumber room seemed like an unknown land to Nicholas because he had never been inside it before and had never even seen the things that it contained. The objects inside the room were strange and new to Nicholas, who found them fascinating.
  5. Nicholas insisted that it was the 'Evil One' who was talking to him and not his aunt because he wanted to prove to his aunt that he did not give in to temptation and enter the garden and that he had not disobeyed her. Also, by insisting that the 'Evil One' was talking to him, he had an excuse to actually disobey his aunt without getting into any trouble. He was also amused at what happened to his aunt and didn't want to help her.
  6. Nicholas' aunt managed to get out of the tank when a kitchen helper, who came to the garden in search of parsley, helped her out.
- B.
1. a. The older, wiser and better people were the adults.  
b. They were proved wrong by the presence of an actual frog in the bread-and-milk which had been put there by Nicholas himself.

2. a. Nicholas wasn't bothered by the fact that his aunt was keeping an eye on the gooseberry garden to make sure he didn't go in there.  
b. He wasn't bothered by it because he didn't even want to go into the gooseberry garden. He wanted to go to the lumber room instead.
  3. a. 'It' was the tapestry which was kept in the lumber room.  
b. On the tapestry was woven a deeply fascinating picture of a hunting scene. A hunter was aiming at a stag. Meanwhile four wolves were coming towards him from four different directions. The scene was fascinating because the hunter had only two arrows in his quiver making the observer wonder if he would be able to escape if the wolves attacked. Yes, the tapestry was fascinating. *Suggested answer. Accept any logical answer.*
  4. a. Nicholas' aunt said these words to Nicholas. When she couldn't find Nicholas, she went looking for him in the gooseberry garden, certain that he had disobeyed her. That's how she fell into the tank.  
b. When she asked him to come into the garden and help her out, Nicholas refused saying that the voice didn't belong to his aunt but to the 'Evil One' who was trying to tempt him into disobedience. The aunt referred to this idea of Nicholas' as 'nonsense'.
- C. 1. Nicholas and his aunt don't seem to share a very close or friendly relationship. She seems to be very strict with him and doesn't seem to like or understand children his age. Nicholas doesn't seem to like her very much or enjoy her company.  
2. *Free response*      3. *Free response*

### Grammar

- A. 2. has travelled                      3. have just completed      4. has worked  
5. has not reached                      6. has taught                      7. has already finished
- B. 2. water, have forgotten      3. have already baked, bring  
4. has recovered, release      5. practises, has just completed

### Vocabulary

1. uninteresting      2. invisible      3. disadvantage      4. impatient      5. illegal

### Listening

#### Listening text

Lions running over the green,  
Fiercest of creatures that ever were seen,  
Chasing Tom and Dick and Sue—  
I hope they won't be caught, don't you?

The lions chase them through the gate,  
But Sue cries out: "O lions, wait,  
My shoe's untied!" One lion then  
Ties the lacing up again.

And after that the chase goes on  
Until the afternoon is gone—  
The fiercest creatures ever seen,  
Lions running over the green!

**Answers:**

1. as the fiercest of creatures that were ever seen
2. running away from the lions
3. because her lace comes undone
4. all afternoon
5. The poem describes a game in which the children imagine that they are being chased by lions. *Suggested answer. Accept any logical answer.*

**Speaking**

*Free response*

**Writing**

*Free response*

**Dictionary Work**

1. behave with someone or deal with someone in a particular way
2. to notice something
3. to express something choosing your words carefully / to make a person seem guilty of a crime when they are not
4. went away from someone or something
5. to feel or express opposition or dislike to something or someone

**ANSWER KEY TO WORKSHEET 9**

- A.** 1. Has, misplaced; misplaces      2. cooks; has cooked      3. have brought; bring  
4. has risen; rise      5. have chosen; choose      6. has gone; go
- B.** 1. convenient, inconvenient      2. polite, impolite      3. illiterate, literate  
4. disobedient, obedient      5. common, uncommon
- C.** 1. a. important      b. eaten  
c. the part that is not covered and can be seen
2. The word 'cacao' comes from two Mayan words meaning 'bitter juice'.
  3. The Europeans first consumed cocoa beans as a beverage. The beans were ground to a powder after which milk or hot water was added to it to make it a rich, hot beverage.
  4. Cocoa butter is important in the process of making chocolates because it adds richness to the chocolate. The richer the mass of cocoa butter, the better the chocolate turns out.
  5. Cocoa beans are cleaned, roasted with their outer skins are removed. They are then ground into a mass of cocoa butter. After that, they are passed through revolving cylinders where more butter, sweeteners and flavours are added. The mass is beaten and finally hardened to create the chocolate.  
*Suggested answer. Accept any logical answer.*

**QUESTION BANK****The Lumber Room****A. Answer in brief.**

What was it that so fascinated Nicholas about the objects in *The Lumber Room*?



**Ans:** Nicholas was fascinated with the exhibits of the lumber room as it was a forbidden delight for him.

**B. Answer in detail.**

Why did the aunt decide to send the children to the beach? Did she achieve her intention by not including Nicholas in the party?

**Ans:** Nicholas' aunt decided to send the children to the beach and not permit him to go, so that she could punish him for refusing to eat his breakfast. She thought that Nicholas would feel sorry and cry when the others left for the picnic, but he actually had a very interesting day.

**C. Choose the correct answer.**

*The main theme in 'The Lumber Room' is*

- denial of an outing to a mischievous boy.
- the revenge a mischievous boy takes on an aunt who enforces punishment.
- punishment sometimes turns into rewards.

**Ans:** c

**D. Read the lines and answer the questions.**

*"... Aunt often tells me that the Evil One tempts me and that I always give in. This time I'm not going to yield."*

- What makes Nicholas speak these words?
- What does he mean by these words?
- Did Nicholas actually think that he was being tempted by the Evil One?

**Ans:** a. Nicholas' aunt asks him to help her get out of the water tank which she had accidentally fallen into and by giving this excuse, he refuses to help her.  
b. His aunt finds that he is a rebel and is a troublesome child. When he does some mischief, she believed that the Evil One tempted him to do so, and that he always gave in to the ways of evil. He merely repeats her words here.  
c. Nicholas knew that he was not being tempted by the Evil One. He wanted to teach his aunt a lesson for punishing him, and used her own words to find an excuse not to help her.

**E. Answer in brief. (Think and Answer)**

What is the significance of the title with respect to the short story, *The Lumber Room*?

**Ans:** The title of Saki's short story, *The Lumber Room* is significant because Nicholas sneaks off to the lumber room and finds it a treasure trove where his imagination can run wild and his ability to be creative in thinking is also exposed.

**F. Answer in detail. (Think and Answer)**

Describe the character of Nicholas in relation to his aunt in the story, *The Lumber Room*.

**Ans:** The two main characters in the story are Nicholas and his aunt. Both are complex characters who have their own faults. Nicholas is a mischievous rebel and a clever trickster. Judging from his aunt's frustration and punishments, living with a child like him is extremely tiresome. Yet, while some of Nicholas's tricks might be wrong, his tricks are actually innocent. He ruins his breakfast by putting a frog in it, and later uses his aunt's rule as a reason not to help her out of the water tank. The writer describes these tricks with affectionate humour, making it clear that they are harmless.