

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

Learning Outcomes

- To comprehend the poem from a child's perspective
- To analyse and compare
- To appreciate the play with words
- To identify the literary devices

Summary: Tagore's, *The Flower-School* vividly portrays how a child observes the surroundings. The child is excited to see the flowers springing up when it begins to rain and dance in the stormy winds. The poet beautifully implies the restriction and strictness in the child's school that she thinks are present in the flower's school. She describes how the flowers go to their school underground to learn how to bloom. It hints at the fact that the child understands the importance of going to school, but detests the lack of freedom and restrictions in school. The child says that just as every child rushes to their mother after school, so also flower-children stretch out their hands to their Creator. The use of different imagery to convey these thoughts help readers imagine the picturesque, sublime beauty of nature from the eyes of an innocent child.

Pre-reading

Discuss:

1. Why do we look forward to break-time, vacation, after school hours?
2. Do children in kindergarten and the lower classes love going back home? Why do you think so?

READING

Students comprehend, compare, perceive and relate

Tell students that the poem, written by Rabindranath Tagore, looks at the pretty flowers that have blossomed all around, from a little school-going child's perspective. The child-speaker addresses his mother while he expresses his thoughts / interpretations.

Bring to their attention the expressions and phrases that the poet has used to portray the numerous thoughts and ideas that fill the child's mind.

Play the audio track and let students listen to the poem once. / Read the poem slowly and let students listen and visualise the scene.

Read the poem / Play the audio track

- *When storm clouds...school underground.*

Ask students:

What time of the year is it? (Rainy season / monsoon) Identify the words that mark this season. Why does the child-speaker say that the wind is blowing its bagpipes? What is the sound created when the wind rushes past bamboo shoots? (A kind of shrill whistling... wooo) What according to the speaker do the flowers do when they hear the bagpipes? (They come rushing out) Can you compare this scene with something familiar to you? What do little children do when the bell rings marking end of school hours? Where do you think was the

child-speaker all this while? (Indoors, as it was raining, comes out and catches sight of the flowers in full bloom) *Why did the child say that the flowers go to school underground?*

Explain *metaphors, imagery* and *personification*. (Refer to *Poetic devices* in the box given below.)

Explain

- how imagery helps readers visualise the scenes the way the poet wants them to.
- that the use of personification, metaphors and similes give the poem the desired effect.

Let students identify the phrases/words that cover these poetic devices.

- *They do their lessons... yellow and white.*

Why does the speaker say that they do their lessons with the doors shut? (They were not seen before this and the speaker assumed that this could be because they were behind closed doors) *What, according to the speaker is the punishment given for disobedience?* (Stand in corners) *If school is underground, where is home?* (Out in the open) *What do the flower-children do during their holidays?* (They rush out to play.)

How does the child describe the scene during the rainy season? What do children do when it is cool and pleasant with a drizzle and there is a gentle breeze blowing about? Can you relate to the scene?

- *Do you know... as I have my own.*

Ask students:

What makes the child-speaker think that the flowers are in a hurry? (He sees them moving against each other in the breeze; they appear to be in a hurry to get home to their mothers just the way children run home in frenzied excitement to their mothers after school)

Post-reading

Let students work on the extended metaphor.

Direct them to work in groups of four and analyse the given lines in column 1 and to identify and fill in the details of comparison as seen from the child's perspective, in column 2.

(The details provided in the second column are for the teacher's reference)

1. Presentation in the poem	2. The child's perspective
The east wind comes whistling through the bamboos	<i>The school bell goes off</i>
Seasonal flowers blossom after the rains	<i>The little flowers have rushed out of school</i>
Some flowers are seen in corners	<i>These are the ones punished by the teacher for disobedience</i>
Rainy days	<i>Vacation time for the flowers</i>
Leaves and branches move in the winds, and there is rain clouds and thunder in the sky during the monsoon	<i>The thunder is nothing but loud clapping for the flower-children to rush out to play in colourful dresses</i>
The flowers move to and fro in the breeze	<i>They appear to be looking up with their petal-arms outstretched towards the sky. They want to go back into the arms of their mother</i>

Poetic devices

Metaphor:

- *blow its bagpipes:* make a shrill whistling sound comparing it to the sound of a school bell
- *dance upon the grass:* move about in the wind
- *stand in a corner:* grow on corners
- *children rush out in dresses of pink and yellow and white:* pink, yellow and white flowers blossom in the rain
- *thunder clouds clap their giant hands:* sound of thunder

Hyperbole: crowds of flowers

Alliteration: (A few examples) **s**torm clouds rumble in the **s**ky flowers – **T**hey do **t**heir lessons

Personification: The moist east wind comes marching over the heath to blow its bagpipes – thunder-clouds clap their giant hands – flower-children rush out in dresses of pink and yellow and white

Imagery: crowds of flowers; dance in wild glee; branches clash together; leaves rustle; flower-children rush out in dresses...white

STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

The Flower School

Comprehension

- A.**
1. blows through the bamboo grove, making a sound similar to bagpipes
 2. dance happily upon the grass
 3. go to an underground school where they study under the supervision of a strict teacher
 4. is in the sky
 5. their mother
- B.**
1.
 - a. Since the speaker does not see the flowers before the June showers, he thinks that the flowers go to school underground.
 - b. According to the speaker, the flowers carry on with their lessons with the doors shut and they are not allowed by their master to come out and play before it is time.
 - c. According to the speaker, the flowers have their holidays during the June showers.
 2.
 - a. The flower children emerge from the underground and rush out into the open.
 - b. The poet describes this place as the scene of a thunderstorm during the monsoon. He tells us that branches are shaking and dashing against each other while leaves rustle as a strong wind blows. Loud sounds of thunder can be heard and in all of this, colourful flowers are emerging and are blooming.
 - c. *Free response*

- C.** Yes. During a storm, when the rain falls it brings relief to the earth and its inhabitants. The rains are responsible for rejuvenating, renewing and nourishing all forms of life on earth, whether they are plants or animals. Therefore, the flowers, having remained for so long behind closed doors, feel liberated by the June showers and are seen in large numbers. Hence, they seem to dance upon the grass in wild glee. *Suggested answer. Accept any logical answer.*

Appreciating the Poem

1. The moist east wind is described as marching and blowing bagpipes; the flowers are compared to school children who do their lessons underground and later dance in wild glee; the branches and leaves also appear to clash and rustle from free will which makes them seem human-like; the thunderclouds are described as having hands with which they clap.
Suggested answer. Accept any logical answer.

2. *Free response*

Vocabulary

Free response

Going further

Free response

QUESTION BANK

The Flower School

A. Answer in brief.

How does the child see the wind in the poem *The Flower School*?

Ans: When the June rain begins to fall, it is accompanied by the moisture laden east-wind that blows through the shrubs and over wasteland. When it rushes past the bamboo shoots, it makes a shrill whistling sound that reminds the child of bagpipes.

B. Answer in detail.

Why does the child say the flowers go to school underground? Bring out the comparison.

Ans: The child suddenly sees crowds of seasonal flowers come out like a carpet on land after the rain. They move briskly in the cool breeze. Looking at such a beautiful scene the child imagines that they are little school children dressed in colourful clothes who have come out happily after their schoolwork is over. Just like the children who are not allowed outside before completing their homework, the flowers too do not blossom before the rain. The coming of rain to the flowers is just like the beginning of holidays to children.

C. Choose the correct answer.

When do the flower children have their holidays?

- When the rains begin
- When they have finished school
- When their vacation is over

Ans: a

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

*Then crowds of flowers come out of a sudden,
from nobody knows where, and dance upon the grass in wild glee.*

- What tempts the flowers to come out?
- Why is their appearance so sudden?
- How does the child see the flowers here?

- Ans:**
- The June rain and the moist east wind beckon the flowers, who are busy underground, to come out.
 - The huge carpet of flowers springs out suddenly because the rain brings them to life from under the ground and a large number of them appear on the surface of the earth.
 - The child sees that they are ecstatic as they dance wildly on the grass.

E. Answer in detail. (Think and answer)

Explain how the child perceives the flowers in the poem *The Flower School*.

Ans: The child witnesses the lovely blooming of flowers after the rain, and compares them to children just come out of school. The child compares the beautiful dance of the flowers in their myriad colours, to children in their colourful dresses dancing happily in the rain. The child is fascinated by this scene and believes that like him, the flowers also have a mother and that their home is in the sky. The child believes that the flowers have come out of their school which is underground, to have some fun. The child-speaker sees the flowers moving briskly in the breeze and feels that they are in a hurry to go back to their mother just as much as any child would.