

## **POETRY: A TIGER IN THE ZOO – LESLIE NORRIS**

### **GIST – Poem at a glance**

- The poet has depicted the tiger both in the cage and in its natural habitat.
- The poet conveys that the tiger is best suited to roam the wild rather than be caged in a zoo
- Animals are more majestic when seen in their natural habitat than enclosed in an artificial setting.
- The tiger is aware of the sights and sounds around the him
- The tiger's body and strength are locked up behind the bars of the cage.
- He strides proudly inside the cage suppressing his anger, while ignoring the visitors

### **EXTRACT BASED COMPREHENSION QUESTION EXERCISES**

Q1. 'He stalks in the his vivid stripes The few steps of his cage,  
On pads of velvet quiet In his quite rage'

- a) Who is 'He' in these lines?
- b) Where is 'he' in these lines?
- c) What is 'his' mood in the poem? Why is it so?
- d) What is the poetic device used in line 3?

### **Answers**

- a) 'He' is the Tiger
- b) 'He' is in a cage in the zoo
- c) 'He' is in an angry mood, as he has been caged, and cannot move around.
- d) The poetic device used is 'metaphor'

Q2. 'He should be snarling around houses

At the jungle's edge,

Baring his white fangs, his claws, Terrorizing the village!

- a) Who is 'He' in these lines?
- b) Where does the poet say 'he' should be in these lines?
- c) What does 'Baring his white fangs' mean in line 3?
- d) Name the poem and the poet?

**Answers**

- a) 'He' is the Tiger.
- b) The poet says that 'he' should be in the jungle/forest/in his natural habitat
- c) 'Baring his white fangs' means showing his sharp teeth in an attempt to frighten the villagers
- d) The poem is A Tiger in the Zoo and the poet is Leslie Norris

**SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS – (30 - 40 words)**

- 1. What does the poet mean when he says that the Tiger's strength is behind the bars?
- 2. Explain why the Tiger ignores the visitors at the zoo?

**Answers**

- 1. The poet means that since the Tiger is locked in the cage, he has no freedom and therefore he cannot use his strength. He is angry and restless but proudly walks the length of his cage.
- 2. The Tiger is caged it has no freedom to roam the vast jungles. He is constrained by the space available in the cage. He is angry and restless. He suppresses his anger by proudly walking the length of his cage and ignoring the visitors who have come to see him.

**LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS – (100-150 words)**

- 1. Explain how the poet contrasts the Tiger in the cage to the Tiger in the jungle?

**Answer – Main points**

The poet says that since the Tiger is caged it has no freedom to roam the vast jungles. He is constrained by the space available in the cage. He is angry and restless but proudly walks the length of his cage, ignoring the visitors who have come to see him. All he can do is stare at the brilliant stars with his brilliant eyes.

The poet contrasts this with the Tiger in the jungle, who is free, to roam the wild, sliding through long grass, and enjoying his liberty. He goes near water holes and where he can find deer. He snarls around houses at the edge of the jungle frightening the villagers by baring his fangs and his claws.

### **UNSOLVED QUESTIONS SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. How does the poet describe the Tiger in his natural habitat?
2. What does the Tiger in the Zoo do to convey his displeasure?

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

What message does the poet want to convey through the poem?

Hints – Do not cage Animals – Give them the freedom that is theirs – They are meant to be in their natural habitat. – Cruelty to animals must end – Empathy to all living creatures is essential – Man should find other means of entertainment rather than keep animals in captivity – etc.