



A TIGER IN THE ZOO

Explanation of the Poem:

Stanza 1

He stalks in his vivid stripes
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.:

Explanation: The tiger in the small cage has bright stripes and moves quietly with soft paws. Even though it's a strong creature, the tiny space makes him upset. The tiger stays quiet because he knows he can't do anything about being stuck in the cage.

Stanza 2

He should be lurking in shadows,
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass.

Explanation: The tiger in the cage dreams of his real home. He should be hiding in the shadows, quietly moving through the forest, waiting for a deer to pass by so he can catch a good meal. The poet wants to tell us that a tiger's real life is in the wild, not in a cage.

Stanza 3

He should be snarling around houses
At the jungle's edge,
Baring his white fangs, his claws,
Terrorising the village!

Explanation: The poet says a wild tiger should roam near the jungle's edge, roaring to show its teeth and claws, scaring villagers. This is how a tiger is meant to be, wild and free, not confined.

Stanza 4

But he's locked in a concrete cell,
His strength behind bars,
Stalking the length of his cage,
Ignoring visitors.

Explanation: The poet suggests that the tiger is learning about loss through losing his ball. The tiger is also learning how to stand up and move on from losses, understanding the true nature of loss.

Stanza 5

He hears the last voice at night,
The patrolling cars,
And stares with his brilliant eyes
At the brilliant stars.

Explanation: In these lines, the poet says that even at night, the tiger is disturbed. It hears the final sound of the zoo officials' patrolling cars. The tiger looks at the bright stars in the sky with hopeful eyes, wishing for freedom.

Poetic Devices Used in the Poem

Repetition: Repetition of words/phrases in the same line

Velvet quiet, quiet rage
brilliant eyes, brilliant stars

Alliteration Repetition of initial consonant sounds in the same line

He **s** stalks in his vivid **s**tripes
But he's locked in a **c**oncrete **c**ell

Metaphor Comparison between two different objects without using "like" or 'as.'

Pads of velvet

Rhyme Scheme for the first, second, and fifth stanzas is abcb, and for the third and fourth stanzas is abcd.

Personification Attributing human qualities to non-human things.

Tiger is referred as 'he'

Extract Based Questions:

1 . He stalks in his vivid stripes,
The few steps of his cage,
On pads of velvet quiet,
In his quiet rage.

(i) What has been personified in the given lines?

(a) Tiger (b) Leopard (c) Lion (d) Hyena

(ii) Where is the tiger at present?

(a) In the forest (b) In a circus (c) In a cage (d) In a room

(iii) Mention any one quality of the animal under reference

(a) Quiet (b) Desperate (c) Vivid stripes on his body (d) Roaring

(iv) Which word in the stanza may also mean graphic or picturesque

(a) Strips (b) Velvet (c) Quiet (d) Vivid

(v) Why is the tiger in 'quite a rage'?

(a) Movement restricted (b) Freedom curtailed (c) Not fed properly (d) (a) Both (b)

Ans. (i) (a) Tiger (ii) (a) In the forest (iii) (c) Vivid stripes of his body (iv) (d) Vivid (v) (d) Both (a) and (b)

2. He should be lurking in the shadow,
Sliding through long grass
Near the water hole
Where plump deer pass.

(i) According to the extract, the poet wishes for the tiger to be 'sliding' through the foliage as this would

(a) assist in keeping the prey unsuspecting of the predator's sound

(b) aid in camouflaging the presence of the predator before it rushes in.

(c) help the predator pounce on the prey comfortably without getting tired.

(d) support the predator's vision as it eyes its prey.

(ii) Which fact DOES NOT connect with the significance of the water hole for the tiger?

(a) Many tigers chase prey into the water and hold the victim's head underwater until it drowns

(b) Prey feed in the water on water-bodies and often wander into the middle of the water hole, where they are vulnerable and easy for the tiger to kill.

(c) Prey that has quenched its thirst ensures consumption of hydrated meat for the tiger.

(d) Chasing the panicked prey from shallow to deep water where the tiger grabs it.

(iii) Pick the option that DOES NOT use 'lurking'

correctly to fill in the blank.

(a) The thug was in the alley late evening, for unsuspecting passers-by.

(b) The hyena was in its den after a good meal.

(c) The detective cautioned her team about the dangers likely to impact the Case.

Ans. (i) (a) Assist in keeping the prey unsuspecting of the predator's sound.

(ii) (c) Prey that has quenched its thirst ensures the consumption of hydrated meat for the tiger.

(iii) (b) The hyena wasin its den after a good meal

Top 10 PYQs:

Short Answer Questions (40-50 words each)

1. Is it safe to allow tigers to live in their natural habitat these days?

Answer: Although it is ideal for tigers to live in the wild, today, it would mean certain death for them. Rapidly shrinking jungles and the danger posed by poachers have pushed tigers to the brink of extinction, making their natural home unsafe.

2. The tiger in the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo' has some obvious limitations, describe them in contrast to its natural habitat.

Answer: The tiger in the zoo is confined to a small space. He is angry that he can't be free to move, hunt, and do what he pleases as he is forced to be a showpiece; and the cage's bars obstruct his view of the starry night. This was all unlike his natural habitat where he hunted fiercely and slept fitfully.

3. Why do you think the tiger was stalking in the cage? What does it show?

Answer: I think the tiger was feeling restless and uneasy in that small cage. He seems to be frustrated and helpless as he cannot come out of the cage into the open and enjoy his freedom. He does not want to be a mere showpiece and a source of entertainment for human beings.

4. What difference do you find in the mood of a tiger when he is in a zoo and when he is in a forest?

Answer: In the zoo, confined to a small cage and devoid of freedom, the tiger feels unhappy rather frustrated, restless, and angry. In the forest, he enjoys moving majestically wherever he wants and terrifies the villagers by displaying his sharp teeth and claws. He is happy in the forest, enjoying his liberty and surroundings, but not in the zoo.

5. How does the tiger terrorize the villagers? Does he have any intention of killing them?

Answer: Sometimes, the tiger roams around freely and comes near the edge of the jungle. He comes very near to the houses of the villagers which are situated on the outskirts of the jungle. Roaming there, he opens out his white sharp teeth and paws to terrorize the villagers. He has no intention of killing them as he never attacks until he is provoked to do so.

6. How does the tiger feel locked in the concrete cell of the zoo? Why does he ignore the visitors

Answer: The tiger is an animal of the wild. He is' a denizen of the forest. Being locked in a concrete cell of the zoo, he feels quite helpless. His immense strength is of no use to him as he is put behind bars. He only stalks the length of his cage. He ignores the visitors who came to see him after buying their tickets. He doesn't want to present himself as an object of entertaining others.

7. Freedom can't be bargained at any cost. What message does Leslie Norris give to the readers in 'A Tiger in the Zoo'?

Answer: Not only humans but animals too cherish freedom. Freedom can't be bargained. In this case, a tiger may be well-fed and protected. However, the curtailment of his freedom keeps him in a 'quiet rage'. He resents being behind the bars. He is a different animal when he is in his natural habitat, the jungle. He roams around the water hole and ambushes his favorite plump deer.

8. Animals, big and small, is being used by humans for their selfish ends? What is your opinion regarding the exploitation of animals? Mention some examples that you can see as a possible solution to this problem.

Answer: Animals, big and small are indeed being used by humans for their selfish ends. We use them for our benefit. Animals are killed, poached, and captured for commercial benefits. Humans have encroached on their space and sheltered them in zoos which is truly inhuman. In the poem, the poet has shown the plight of a tiger. He is captured and confined in a small cage. He is frustrated, angry, and restless. He longs for freedom. Confinement brings bondage and bondage is cruel. Every day we see many animals suffering due to humans. Monkeys are captured and made to perform on the street, Elephants are chained and forced to lift heavy loads. Many animals are sheltered in zoos for the entertainment of human beings. They are kept in poor conditions. They are treated inhumanely. We should learn to respect nature and its inhabitants. After all, these animals share the earth with us.

9. Some animals are becoming extinct; the tiger is one such animal. What do you think could be the reason? Should this decrease in number be stopped? Why?

Answer: Tigers face a dire threat from poaching and habitat loss. Hunted for their fur and use in traditional medicines, their habitats are also disappearing due to agricultural expansion. This reduces prey availability and disrupts the delicate forest ecosystem. Urgent protection measures are needed to save these iconic creatures and maintain the balance of our ecosystems.

10. Give contrasting pictures of the tiger in his natural habitat and the locked cage of the zoo. How does he feel and behave differently in both places?

Answer: The jungle is the natural home of the mighty tiger, where it roams freely, stealthily hunting plump deer near water holes. Occasionally, it ventures near villages, exuding power but attacking only when provoked. Yet, the same majestic creature is confined, its spirit broken, confined behind bars, becoming a mere spectacle for visitors. The tiger's quiet rage is evident as it paces its cage, staring at the vast night sky, a poignant reminder of its lost freedom.