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HOW THE SQUIRREL GOT HIS STRIPES

This story is one of the many stories referred to in the Ramayana. The story tries to find out the logic behind the stripes on the body of a squirrel. It also emphasizes the dignity of labour, the importance of feelings in participating in team work, and that even the smallest contribution is important in some way...



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson you will be able to:

- relate to a simple story in English;
- critically analyse a situation and take a decision;
- use reasoning to form an opinion;
- value every individual's contribution however small;
- accept people and respect individual differences;
- use adjectives in the correct sequence, and
- write the description of an object.



2.1 LET US READ THE TEXT

Ram asked his army to build a bridge over the sea. Work began at once on a stone bridge. The monkeys pulled out rocks and heavy stones from the mountains, and carried them to the sea. They cut them into shape and began to build the bridge. All this was very difficult



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work and it took a long time. Thousands of monkeys worked night and day. Rama felt happy. “How hard they work! Their love for me makes them work like this,” thought Rama.

One day Rama saw a small brown squirrel. He was going up and down the seashore with little pebbles in his mouth. The little squirrel could carry only little pebbles at a time in his small mouth. He carried the pebbles from the seashore and dropped them into the sea. A great monkey was carrying a large heavy stone on his back and the squirrel came in his way. The monkey jumped back.

“Here, you little thing,” shouted the monkey in a voice like thunder, “you’re in my way, I stepped back and you’re alive now. But I nearly fell. And what are you doing here?”

The little squirrel looked up at the great monkey.

“I’m sorry you nearly fell, Brother Monkey,” he said in his small voice, “but please always look where you are going. I’m helping Rama build the bridge. And I want to work hard for him.”

“You, what?” shouted the monkey and laughed aloud. “Did you hear that!” he said to the other monkeys. “The squirrel is building a bridge with his pebbles. Oh dear! Oh dear! I’ve never heard a funnier story.” The other monkeys laughed too.

The squirrel did not think this funny at all. He said, “Look, I can’t carry mountains or rocks. God gave me only a little strength. I can only carry pebbles. My heart cries out for Rama and I’ll do all I can for him.”

The monkeys said, “Don’t be foolish. Do you think you can help Rama? Do you

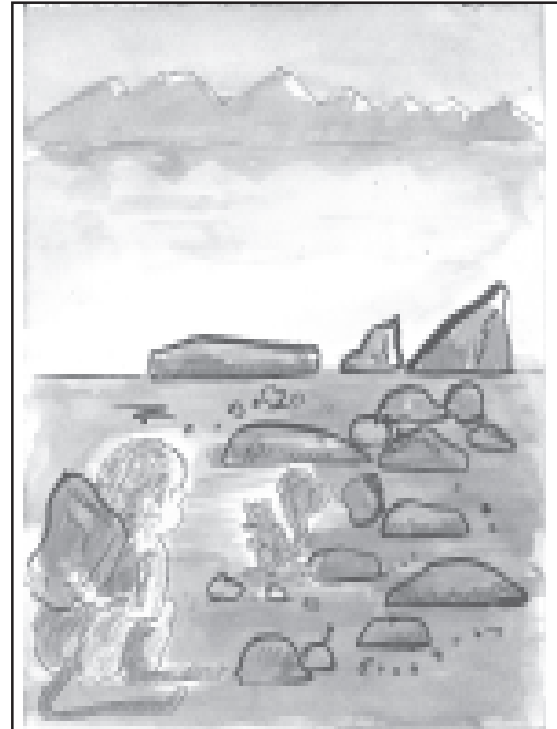


Fig. 2.1

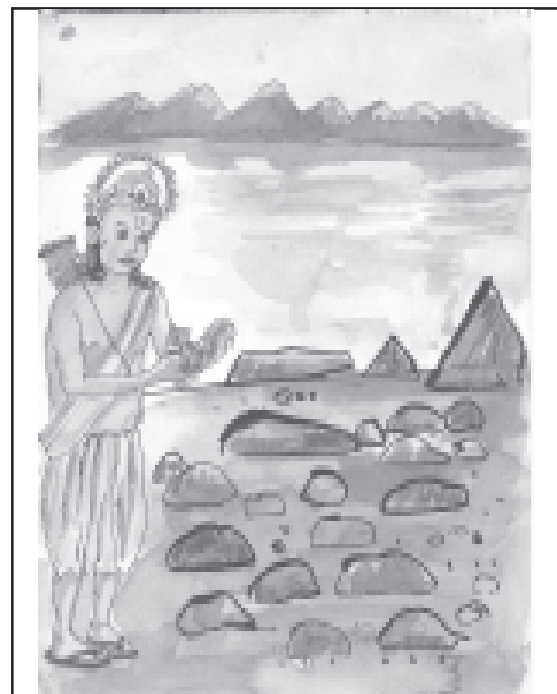


Fig. 2.2

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think we can build a bridge with pebbles? He has a big army to help him. Go home and don't get in our way."

"But I want to help, too," said the squirrel and would not go.

He carried the pebbles again from the shore to the sea. The monkeys were angry and one of them picked up the squirrel by his tail and threw him far away.

The squirrel, crying out the name of Rama, fell into his hands.

Then Rama held the squirrel close to him. He said to the monkeys, "Do not make fun of the weak and the small. Your strength or what you do is not important. What matters is your love. This little squirrel has love in his heart."

He then held the squirrel closer to him and said, "Little one, your love touches my heart." He said these words and passed his fingers gently over the little squirrel's back. And when he put him down there were three white stripes on his back. These were the marks of Lord Rama's fingers.

From then on the squirrel carries the three white stripes on his back.

(A tale from the Ramayana)

2.2 LET US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

2.2.1 PART 1

Rama asked his army.....The other monkeys laughed too.

Monkeys were helping Lord Rama to build a bridge over the sea. They were pulling out the rocks and heavy stones from the mountains and carrying them to the sea. A little squirrel was also carrying little pebbles from the mountains and throwing them into the sea. Suddenly he came in the way of a big monkey. The monkey shouted at the squirrel and wanted to know what he was doing there. When the squirrel told the monkey that he was also contributing in building the bridge, all the monkeys made fun of him.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

1. Building a bridge was difficult work involving several steps. Complete the steps:

- pulling out _____
- _____ the sea
- _____ shapes
- building the bridge



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2. Complete the following table showing the contrast between the monkey and the squirrel:

	Monkey	Squirrel
size		
voice		small \ weak \ soft
strength	strong	
attitude		polite

3. Why did the monkeys make fun of the squirrel?

2.2.2 PART 2

The squirrel did not think this.....white stripes on his back.

The squirrel did not give up even when the monkeys made fun of him. The monkeys were angry and one of them picked up the squirrel and flung (threw) him away. The squirrel fell into the hands of Lord Rama. Lord Rama told the monkeys not to make fun of the squirrel because he was small. He also told the monkeys that he valued the squirrel’s work and help in building the bridge because it was done with love. Lord Rama gently ran his fingers over the squirrel’s back and put him down. The three white stripes that we see on the back of a squirrel are believed to be the marks of Lord Rama’s fingers.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. How did the squirrel justify what he was doing?
2. Why did the squirrel want to help in building the bridge?
3. Was the work of the squirrel less important than the monkey’s work? Give reasons for your answer.
4. How did the squirrel come into Rama’s hands?
5. How did the squirrel get his stripes?



2.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

Read the following descriptions taken from the text:

- a small brown squirrel
- a large heavy stone
- three white stripes

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Notes

- To describe any person, place or thing, adjectives are used to tell their size, colour, age, origin, etc. When two or more than two adjectives are used before a noun, they are usually used in the following order:

opinion	size	shape	age	colour	origin	material	noun
			old			oil	paintings
	small	round				wooden	box
lovely		long		black		leather	coat
delicious					Indian		food

- Numbers go before adjectives. Example: three white stripes
- If there are more than two adjectives, a comma is usually used between them.

Exercise 1

Use the dialogues/statements given in each bubble to complete the description in the sentence given against it. The first one is done for you.

1. You are wearing a lovely _____ saree. It's silk, isn't it?

You are wearing a lovely saree. It's silk. Isn't it?

1. You are wearing a lovely silk saree.

2. This car is Japanese. It's very fast.

2. This is a _____ car.

3.

3. Have you seen my _____ shirt?

4. I want to buy two armchairs. I am looking for wooden ones in brown.

4. I want to buy _____ arm-chairs.



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Exercise 2

Complete the sentences using two adjectives in each sentence.

1. My favourite possession is a \ an _____.
2. I would like to buy a \ an _____ for my mother.
3. My father has a \ an _____.
4. I like _____. I think she is _____ actress.
5. I live in a \ an _____.



Work with a friend to solve riddles. This is how you can do it.

- Describe an object without naming it and ask your friend to identify the object.
- Then let your friend describe an object and you guess what it is.
- To describe any object, you can tell about its size, shape, colour, texture or its function, whatever is relevant.

Example:

Riddle: I am a long thin object, usually made of wood. You use me for writing or drawing. What am I?

Answer: a pencil



LET US LISTEN 2.1

Listen to the poem “Human Family” on tape/CD **or** ask a friend to read it out to you.

Human Family
I note the obvious differences
in the human family.
Some of us are serious,
some thrive on comedy.

The variety of our skin tones
can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple,
tan and blue and white.

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I've sailed upon the seven seas
and stopped in every land,
I've seen the wonders of the world
not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women
called Jane and Mary Jane,
but I've not seen any two
who really were the same.

I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.
We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

– *Maya Angelou*

After listening to the poem complete the following summary by filling each blank with a word from the box:

same	human	colour	alike	different
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We all have a (1) _____ nature and (2) _____ of skin. Nowhere in the world do we find any two people who are the (3) _____. Still we are all (4) _____ because we all belong to the (5) _____ family.



2.4 LET US WRITE

Describing an Object

Read the following notice put up on a students' notice board:

Date: _____

LOST!

I have lost my wristwatch. It is a Titan Classique ladies' wristwatch. It is small and diamond-shaped with a golden dial and a black strap. 'Water-resistant' is marked on the back of the dial.

The finder is requested to return it to the undersigned.

Monisha

X B



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Notice the details in the description:

Brand name	Classique ladies'
Size & shape	small diamond-shaped
Colour of dial	golden
Colour of strap	black

Exercise

You lost a briefcase containing important documents while travelling by bus. Complete the following notice to be inserted in a newspaper. Include all the details describing the briefcase and its contents. Give your contact number and address.

<p>LOST</p> <p>I lost my brief-case while travelling from Saket to the Interstate Bus Terminal by Bus No. 249 on 4 March.</p> <p>It is _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>It contains _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>The finder is requested to contact _____</p> <p>_____</p>



LET US DO 2.1

Talk to two of your friends or siblings (brothers\sisters). Make lists of what you can do and what your friends \ brothers\ sisters can do.

The things I can do	The things my friend \ brother\sister (1) can do	The things my friend \ brother \ sister (2) can do

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What can you say about the importance/usefulness of each of the abilities you filled in the three columns in the above table? Write and explain in 8-10 sentences.



DO YOU KNOW

What Is bullying?

Teasing or making fun of a sibling (brother/sister) or a friend is not usually harmful when done in a playful and friendly way. But when teasing becomes hurtful, unkind, and constant, it becomes bullying, and needs to be stopped.

Bullying means intentionally hurting someone in physical, verbal, or psychological ways. It can range from hitting, pushing, name-calling, threats, and mocking, to extorting (obtaining by force) money.

The effects can be serious and affect the victim's sense of self-worth and future relationships.



LET US DO 2.2

Assume that a new family with two children has recently shifted to your neighbourhood from another State. These children are bullied by other children very often because of their language, the clothes they wear and their mannerisms.

- What would you do to make all children accept each other's differences and be friends?
- Put your ideas into practice.
- Write in 3-4 sentences about what you did and what the result was.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson, you learnt that we should not make fun of the weak and the small, and that love is more important than physical strength.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Which qualities of Lord Rama are highlighted in this story?



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2. What is the message given through this lesson?
3. Have you ever had an experience in which a person surprised you by doing something which you thought he/she could not do? Describe the situation in 60-80 words.



ANSWERS

2.2.1 PART 1

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

1. The following steps were involved in building a bridge:
 - pulling out rocks & heavy stones from the mountains
 - carrying the rocks & stones to the sea
 - cutting them into shape

	Monkey	Squirrel
size	<u>great \big</u>	<u>small \little</u>
voice	<u>loud</u>	small \ weak \ soft
strength	strong	<u>weak</u>
attitude	<u>rude/impolite</u>	polite

3. They thought the squirrel was foolish to think of building a bridge with pebbles and to think it could help in building the bridge.

2.2.2 PART 2

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. The squirrel justified what he was doing by saying that he did not have much strength but he could still help by carrying pebbles because he wanted to help Lord Rama in whatever way he could.
2. The squirrel wanted to help in building the bridge because he had love for Lord Rama and wanted to show his love for Him.
3. Individual responses.
4. When one of the monkeys picked the squirrel up by the tail and threw him away, he fell into Lord Rama's hands.

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- When the squirrel fell into Lord Rama's hand, he gently and lovingly ran his fingers on the squirrel's back. The stripes on the squirrel's back are the marks of Lord Rama's fingers.

2.3 LET US LEARN GRAMMAR

Exercise 1

- This is a fast Japanese car.
- Have you seen my new white shirt?
- I want to buy two brown wooden armchairs.

Exercise 2

Individual responses

2.5 LET US LISTEN

- different (2) colour (3) same (4) alike (5) human

2.6 LET US WRITE

Individual responses

LET US DO 2.1

Individual responses

Suggested response: Different people are capable of doing different things due to their different abilities and skills. That does not make any one better than the other.

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- compassion/kindness, gentleness, respect for all living beings
- We should not make fun of the weak and the small. Love is more important than physical strength.
- Individual responses



Notes