

Vocation

Rabindranath Tagore

When the **gong** sounds ten in the morning and
I walk to school by our lane.

Every day I meet the **hawker** crying,
"Bangles, crystal bangles!"

There is nothing to hurry him on, there is no road he must take,
no place he must go to, no time when he must come home.

I wish I were a hawker, spending my day in the road, crying,
"Bangles, crystal bangles!"



When at four in the afternoon I come back from the school,
I can see through the gate of that house the gardener
digging the ground.

He does what he likes with his spade, he soils his clothes with dust,
nobody takes him to task if he gets **baked in the sun** or gets wet.

I wish I were a gardener digging away at the garden with
nobody to stop me from digging.



Just as it gets dark in the evening and my mother sends me to bed,
I can see through my open window the watchman walking up and down.

The lane is dark and lonely, and the street-lamp
stands like a giant with one red eye in its head.

The watchman swings his lantern and walks with his shadow
at his side, and never once goes to bed in his life.

I wish I were a watchman walking the streets all night,
chasing the shadows with my lantern.



gong a metal disc that makes a sound when hit

hawker a person who sells different items on the street

baked in the sun exposed to the strong, hot sun for a long time

Exercises

A. Fill in the right words to complete the summary.

The poem 'Vocation' is about a boy who is fascinated by the different _____ he encounters in his daily life. In the first stanza, the boy sees a hawker who sells _____. The hawker roams freely on the _____, shouting about his goods. The boy envies the hawker's _____ and wishes he too could wander about without any _____.

freedom
bangles
professions
streets
restrictions

In the second stanza, the boy notices a _____ digging the _____ in the garden. The gardener does not have to worry about his _____ getting soiled with _____. Nobody scolds him if he gets sunburned or wet. Again, the boy admires the gardener's independence and wants to do work in the open without having to follow _____ from anyone.

In the third stanza, the boy observes a _____ walking up and down the _____ at night. The boy imagines the thrill and freedom of walking through the dark streets, carrying a _____ without being made to go to _____ on time.

lantern
bed
watchman
street

Throughout the poem, the poet captures the boy's _____ for freedom. Through the child, he expresses a wish to break free from the structured, _____ life of a child and experience the _____ he sees in the lives of the hawker, gardener and _____.

B. Choose the right option.

- What is the hawker selling in the poem?
a. plates b. bangles c. books d. All of these
- Who does the poet see when he comes back from school?
a. the hawker b. the watchman c. the gardener d. the headmaster
- How does the narrator feel about going to bed?
a. He likes sleeping early. c. He enjoys sleeping outdoors.
b. He wants to stay awake like the watchman. d. He likes to sleep with the lights on.

Once upon a time, a wise and just king named Vikramaditya (also known as Vikram) ruled the ancient kingdom of Ujjain. The king worked tirelessly for the well-being of his people. He often **disguised** himself and mingled with his people to find out if they were happy. One day, while walking around as a merchant, he met a young man in despair.

When asked why he was sad, the young man explained, "A few months ago, my father passed away, leaving behind a letter promising me great wealth and prosperity from the land he had **bequeathed** to me. I diligently followed his instructions, but I have yet to benefit from the land, and my wealth has not grown."

"I shall do my utmost to help you. Please show me the letter," Vikram said.

The young man took out a letter from his pocket and handed it over to Vikram. After reading it carefully, Vikram asked, "Tell me, my friend, how often did you visit your field?"

The man replied, "Every day. I followed my father's peculiar instruction to 'always come and go in the shade.' I would carry an umbrella and walk to my field. I would oversee the labourers' progress and assess the work. Only after completing these tasks would I return home, walking under the same umbrella, just as my father had written in the letter."

Vikram smiled. "It seems that your father enjoyed riddles. You see, the 'shade' he referred to was not the shade of an umbrella. He wanted you to go before sunrise and return only after sunset. The labourers would witness your hard work and be inspired to work diligently as well. That was what your father meant."

The young man's eyes widened in astonishment. "Why, this never occurred to me!"

He thanked Vikram, and walked towards his fields,

determined to follow his father's instructions now in the light of what Vikram had said.

If you **disguise** yourself, you change your appearance so that people cannot recognise you.

bequeath to give or leave by will



- I. Vetal narrated several stories, each ending in a question. Look at the pictures and fill in the blanks to complete the story.



A princess had to choose among _____ suitors. She gave each of them a _____. She promised to _____ the one who would bring back the most impressive _____ after a _____. After a year, the first _____ suitors came back with lush plants, while the third came back with an _____ pot, claiming his seed did not _____. The princess chose the _____ suitor. Why?

The princess had given them _____ seeds, which would not sprout. The first two suitors had cheated by replacing the seeds, but the third suitor was _____ about his result.

The Plaint of the Camel

Charles E Carryl

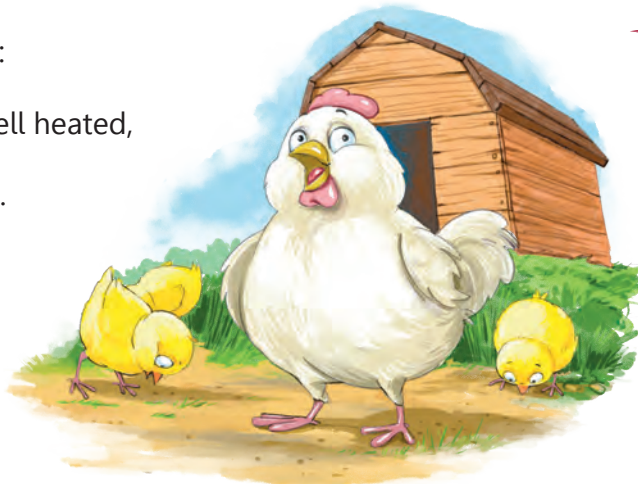
Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And, as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.
But there's never a question
About MY digestion—
Anything does for me!



Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor camel dozes—
Any place does for me!



Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens:
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
Anywhere does for me!



plaint complaint

canary a small yellow bird that sings

poodle a type of dog with thick curly hair

repose to rest

slumber to sleep

handy useful and easy to use

B. Circle the emotions felt by the camel in the poem.

happiness satisfaction envy discomfort annoyance appreciation indifference

In the poem, the camel seems to show emotions similar to those of a human. This technique of giving human characteristics to animals or nonliving things is known as **personification**.

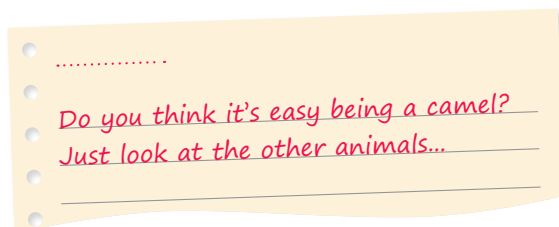
In the examples below, notice the things that are personified (underlined) and the words or phrases that show personification (circled).

- His tired, overworked scooter stopped as the light turned green.
- The exam paper stared back at her.
- "We must whistle when we reach the finish line," suggested Coco the cat.

C. Identify and underline the things that are personified in each sentence. Circle the specific words or phrases that show personification.

1. The flowers woke up as the sun rose.
2. Every time it rained, the house let out a nasty groan.
3. As they read the timetable, the baby rabbits began to cry.
4. The ocean danced with excitement during the storm.
5. The trees waved their branches in the wind.

D. Imagine you are the camel. Write a diary entry describing your situation. Try to make it humorous. You may begin like this.



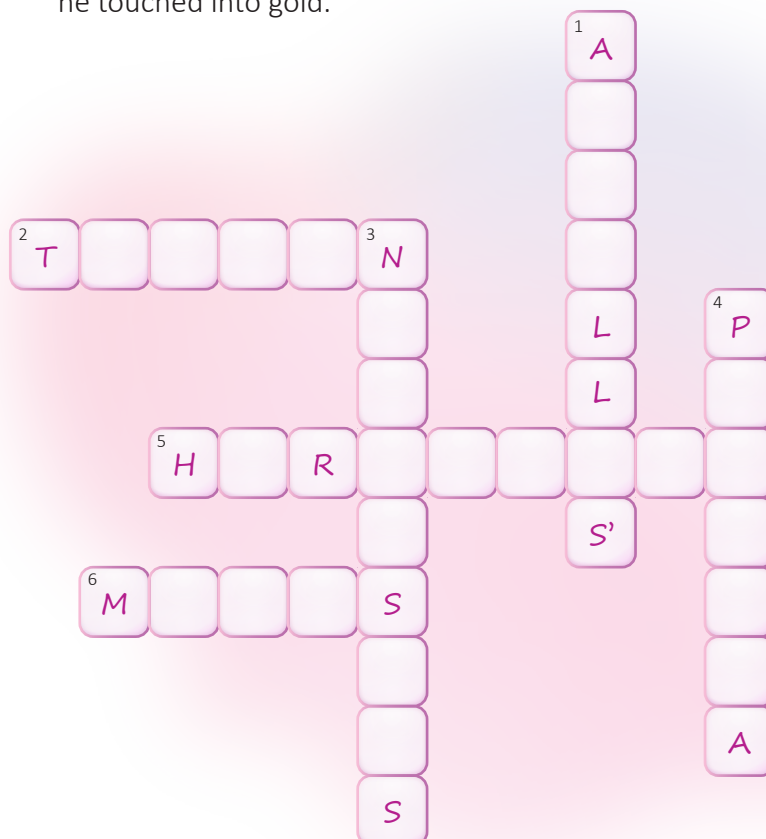
Remember to write the place, date, day and time at the top of your diary entry.

E. Which animal do you think has the most comfortable life? Is there a creature that lives a life filled with comfort and relaxation, free from the stresses and worries that plague us humans? Discuss in class.

- Is it the sloth, which spends up to 18 hours a day snoozing in its treetop hammock?
- Or is it the koala, whose diet consists solely of eucalyptus leaves, providing it with an endless supply of snacks?
- Perhaps you envy the sea otter, which spends its days floating on its back, munching on shellfish and seafood delicacies, while its fur is meticulously groomed by the ocean currents.
- Or maybe it's the tortoise, which takes life at a slow and steady pace, enjoying a lifespan of up to 150 years, with minimal worries and maximum relaxation.

G. Use the clues to solve the crossword puzzle and complete the phrases inspired by Greek mythology.

1. _____ heel refers to someone's weak spot, a vulnerability or flaw, named after a mythical hero who only had one weak spot—on his heel.
2. A _____ horse describes a strategy to attack something by disguising a dangerous object as something harmless or good.
3. The word 'narcissism', or excessive love for oneself, is based on _____, a character who was so handsome that he fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water.
4. A _____'s box refers to a process that, if started, will cause many problems, based on a story in which a box released all the world's evil when it was opened.
5. A task that requires great strength or effort is called a _____ task, inspired by the legendary labours of Hercules.
6. When someone has the ability to turn everything into success, they are said to have the _____ touch, referring to a mythical king who had the power to turn anything he touched into gold.

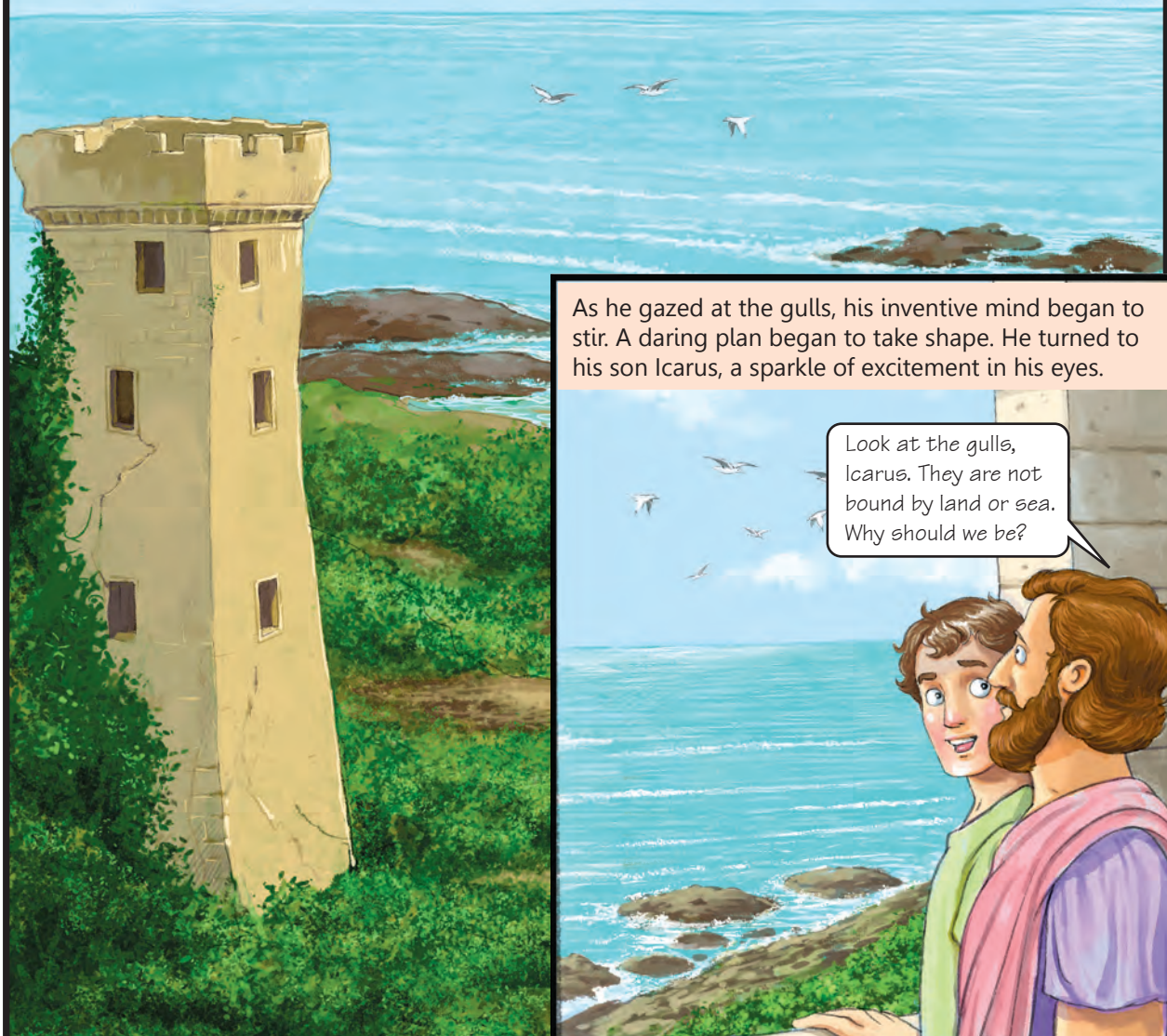


Find out the names of the stories in which these characters feature.



In ancient Greece, there lived a brilliant architect, sculptor and inventor named Daedalus, who worked for the ruthless King Minos. He had won **acclaim** for his incredible creations—from clever machines to magnificent buildings. But what surpassed all others was the **labyrinth** he had created—so **intricate** that once inside, escape was impossible. However, the king's favour proved **fleeting**, and one day Daedalus and his son Icarus found themselves imprisoned in a towering fortress on the island of Crete. The only way out was to fly. But humans couldn't fly. Or could they?

From his cell, Daedalus watched the seagulls, those free spirits of the sky. Not a day passed that he did not think of escaping.



As he gazed at the gulls, his inventive mind began to stir. A daring plan began to take shape. He turned to his son Icarus, a sparkle of excitement in his eyes.

Look at the gulls, Icarus. They are not bound by land or sea. Why should we be?



Do and Learn

Form groups of four or five. Ask a group member to describe an imaginary creature. Draw this creature based on the description, and give it a name. You could describe the creature like this.

Round, plump,
covered with fur

Long and
floppy ears

Two short and stubby
legs with tiny webbed
feet for gliding

About the size of
a small dog

Small, colourful
wings with
intricate patterns

Large, round
head with big,
sparkling eyes

Long, bushy tail

Compare your drawing
with those of your friends.
How similar or different
are the drawings?



A. Read these sentences. Look at the abbreviations in colour.

We need new **ads** for our product. But our designer is down with **flu**.

Dr Singh was a professor at **St** Joseph's College. I **haven't** seen him lately.

The new **CEO** of the company has installed **CCTV** cameras for security.

UNESCO works to promote education, science and culture around the world.

Abbreviations are shortened forms of words or phrases. They can be in the form of shortenings, contractions, initialisms or acronyms.

Shortenings are created by removing parts of a word, usually the beginning or the end. They are often used in informal contexts, for example, **lab** (laboratory), **ad** (advertisement), **flu** (influenza).

Contractions are formed by omitting letters from the middle of the word, for example **Dr** (Doctor), **Ltd** (Limited), **St** (Saint). Because the last letter of the word is present, no full stops are used. In verb forms and archaic words, we replace the omitted letters by an apostrophe, for example, **don't** (do not), **o'er** (over), **'tis** (it is).

Initialisms are formed from the first letters of a series of words, and each letter is pronounced individually, for example, **CEO** (chief executive officer), **UK** (United Kingdom), **CCTV** (closed-circuit television). Initialisms are always capitalised, and generally do not use full stops between letters.

Acronyms are similar to initialisms but are pronounced as a single word. For example, NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), RADAR (radio detection and ranging). Acronyms are generally capitalised, and do not use full stops between letters.

B. Look at the abbreviations. Write them in a table as shortenings, contractions, initialisms or acronyms. Write their full forms.

gym ASAP rhino SIM info FAQs
'twas DIY exam ATM I'm it's SCUBA
you're LASER 'cause let's GPS MBA
NGO PIN photo RSVP FOMO

Type the characters you see in the picture below.

bandelate

A **captcha** is a computer program designed to recognise the difference between human users and machines, often showing letters or numbers with their shape changed slightly. Find out its full form.