

## Grade VI

### Lesson 10. The Banyan Tree

PROSE

#### Summary of the chapter

##### **The Grandfather's House in Dehradun:**

The author as a young boy used to live in his grandfather's house in Dehradun. There was an old banyan tree in the garden. The tree was home to squirrels, butterflies and snails. The author used to hide in its branches and behind thick green leaves.

##### **The Author has a Small Friend Squirrel:**

His first friend was a small grey squirrel. The squirrel became friendly after it found that the author did not have any catapult or air gun. It grew quite bold and started taking small food pieces from his hand. It started going deep into his pockets in search of food. During the time when figs appeared, the banyan tree was the noisiest place in the garden. The birds of all kinds would flock into branches. The author used to read books and looked down through the leaves at the world below.

##### **The Author saw the classic Fight between a Mongoose and a Cobra:**

One day, he saw a huge black cobra coming out of a group of cactus. At the same time, a mongoose also came from the bushes. They came face-to-face. Both of them were aware of each other's strength and weakness. It was a battle of champions because both were equally skilled and experienced fighters.

The mongoose was clever, aggressive and a superb fighter while the cobra can strike swiftly and his sacs were full of deadly poison. The fight between the cobra and the mongoose began and there were three spectators of the battle. The three viewers were the author, a myna and a jungle crow. They settled down on the cactus to watch the outcome of the battle.

##### **The Mongoose Bit the Snake:**

The mongoose started the attack. It made a pretended move to one side. The cobra struck, but the mongoose jumped to one side. The mongoose bit the snake on its back. The two birds tried to feed on the cobra, thinking that it is dead. The crow and myna made three attempts to feed on the cobra. They collided two times with each

other. Meanwhile, the mongooses keep attacking the snake. In the third round, the cobra stuck the crow with great force and killed it. The myna remained on the cactus and decided not to interfere when the snake and the mongoose resumed their fight.

### The Mongoose Killed the Cobra:

The Cobra grew tired and weak. The mongoose went near to attack the cobra. The Cobra coiled itself around the mongooses in a frightening manner. The mongoose killed the cobra when it ceased to struggle and dragged it into the bushes. The myna came to the ground and looked into the bushes. It later flew away.

NCERT Corner

Working with the Text

#### A. Complete the following sentences.

1. The old banyan tree "did not belong" to grandfather, but only to the boy, because\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The small grey squirrel became friendly when\_\_\_\_\_.
3. When the boy started to bring him pieces of cake and biscuit, the squirrel\_\_\_\_\_.
4. In the spring, the banyan tree \_\_\_\_\_ and would come there.
5. The banyan tree served the boy as a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The young boy spent his afternoon in the tree \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Ans.

1. The 65 old man could not climb on it
2. It found that the boy did not carry any catapult or air gun in his hand.
3. Became bold enough to take pieces of food from his hand
4. was full of small red figs, and birds of all kinds would come there

5. Platform to sit and spend the afternoon
6. Learning against it, reading story books

**B. Answer the following questions.**

**1. "It was to be a battle of champions."**

(i) What qualities did the two champions have? Pick out words and phrases from the paragraph above this line in the text and write them down.

Mongoose

Cobra

(a)

(a)

(b)

(b)

(c)

(c)

**Ans.**

**Mongoose**

**Cobra**

(a) A super fighter

(a) Skilled and experienced fighter

(b) Clever

(b) Strike with the speed of light

(c) Aggressive

(c) Fangs were full of poison

**(ii) What did the cobra and the mongoose do, to show their readiness for the fight?**

The cobra produced a hissing sound and moved his tongue in and out to challenge the mongoose. It raised itself off the ground and spread its broad hood. The mongoose moved his tail and the long hair on his spine stood up.

*Next Generation School*

**2. Who were the other two spectators? What did they do? (Did they watch or did they join in the fight?)**

Apart from the author, the other two spectators were a myna and a jungle crow. First, they sat on the cactus to watch the outcome of the fight. Later, they tried thrice to take part in the proceedings and dived at the cobra, but failed.

The Crow died at the end after the cobra attacked it. The mongoose dragged the dead snake into the bush and the myna flew away.

**3. Read the descriptions below of what the snake did and what the mongoose did. Arrange their actions in the proper order.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (i) Ceased to struggle  | (a) grabbed the snake by the snout            |
| (ii) Tried to mesmerise the mongoose                          | (b) dragged the snake into the bushes         |
| (iii) Coiled itself around the mongoose                       | (c) darted away and bit the cobra on the back |
| (iv) Struck the crow  | (d) pretended to attack the cobra on one side |
| (v) Struck again and missed                                   | (e) refused to look into the snake's eyes     |
| (vi) Struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | (f) sprang aside, jumped in and bit           |

**Ans.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (i) Tried to mesmerise the mongoose                           | (a) refused to look into the snake's eyes     |
| (ii) Struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | (b) pretended to attack the cobra on one side |

- (iii) Struck again and missed (c) darted away and hit the cobra on the back
- (iv) Struck the crow (d) sprang aside, jumped in and bit
- (v) Coiled itself around the mongoose (e) grabbed the snake by the snout
- (vi) Ceased to struggle (f) dragged the snake into the bushes

4. (i) **What happened to the crow in the end?**

The crow became a victim of snake-bite and died in the end.

(ii) **What did the myna do finally?**

The myna decided not to interfere in the fight. After the snake was killed taken into the bush, the myna flew away.

**Working with Language**

1. **The word 'round' usually means a kind of shape. What is its meaning in the story?**

Here, it means a phase in the flight between the mongoose and the snake.

2. **Find five words in the following paragraph, which are generally associated with trees. But here, they have been used differently. Underline the words.**

**Hari leaves for work at nine every morning. He works in the local branch of the firm of which his uncle is the owner. Hari's success is really the fruit of his own labour. He is happy, but he has a small problem. The root cause of his problem is a stray dog near his office. The dog welcomes hari with a loud bark every day.**

Hari leaves for work at nine every morning. He works in the local branch of the firm of which his uncle is the owner. Hari's success is really the fruit of his own labour. He is happy, but he has a small problem. The root cause of his problem is a stray dog near his office. The dog welcomes Hari with a loud bark every day

**B. The words in the box are all words that describe movement. Use them to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.**

divided gliding sprang darting whipped back delving

1. When he began to trust me, the squirrel began \_\_\_\_\_ into my pockets for morsels of cake.
2. I saw a cobra \_\_\_\_\_ out of a clump of cactus.
3. The snake hissed, his forked tongue \_\_\_\_\_ in and out.
4. When the cobra tried to bite it, the mongoose \_\_\_\_\_ aside.
5. The snake \_\_\_\_\_ his head \_\_\_\_\_ to strike at the crow.
6. The birds \_\_\_\_\_ at the snake.

1. delving	2. gliding	3. darting	4. sprang	5. whipped, back	6. dived
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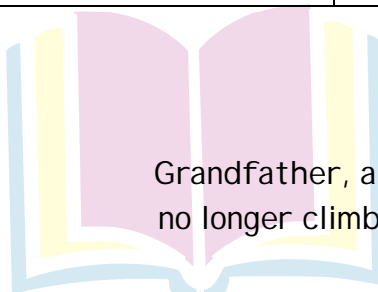
**C. Find words in the story, which show things striking violently against each other.**

1. The cobra struck the crow, his snout th \_\_\_\_\_ ing against its body
2. The crow and the myna c \_\_\_\_\_ ll \_\_\_\_\_ in mid - air.
3. The birds divided at the snake, but b \_\_\_\_\_ d in to each other instead

1. Thudding	2. Collided	3. bumped
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**D. Look at these sentences.**

- In the spring, birds of all kind would flock into the banyan tree's branches.



Grandfather, at sixty-five, could no longer climb the banyan tree.

I could hide myself in its branches.

- I would spend the afternoons there.

I could look down through the leaves at the world below.

I could read there.

'Would' tells us what the author used to do or what used to happen.

'Could' tells us what the author was usually able to do or grandfather is now not able to do.

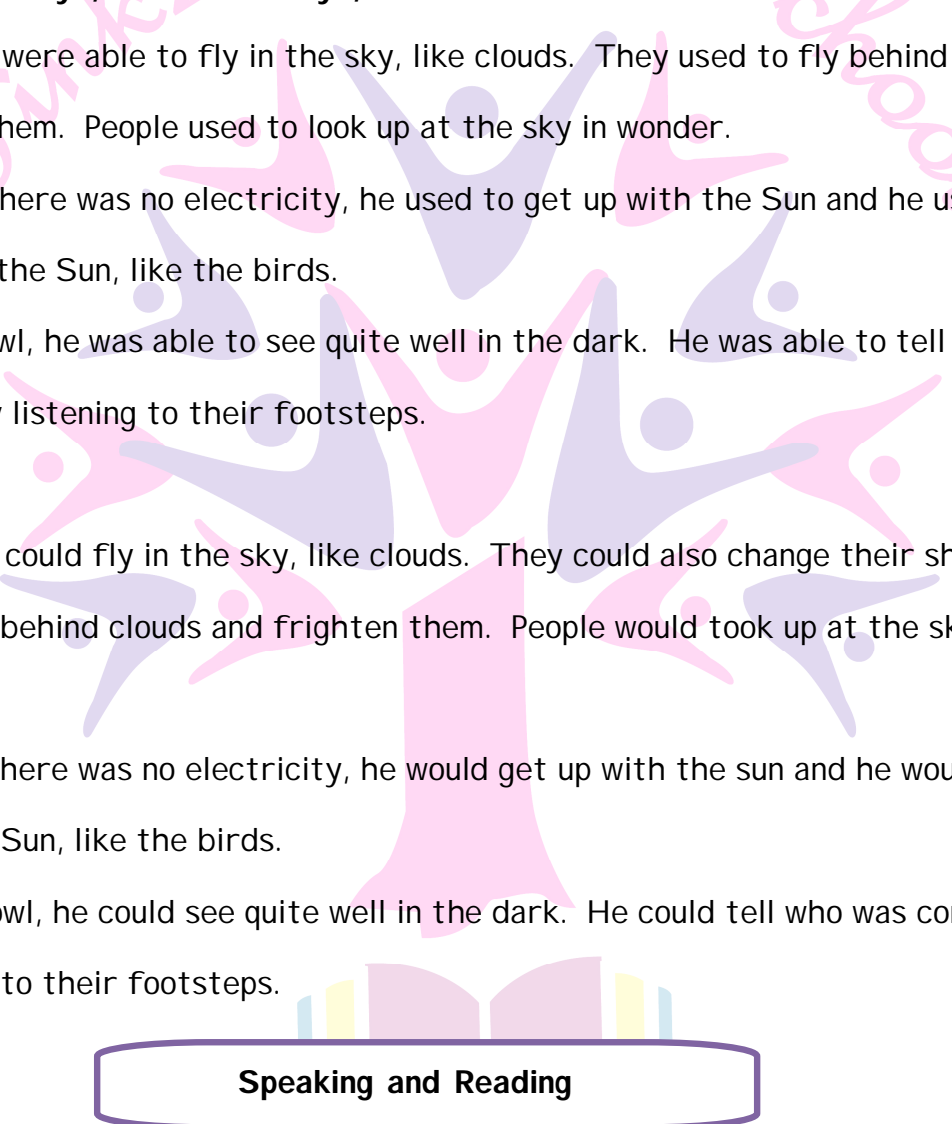
**Choose would and could to replace the italicised words in the following sentences.**

**Grandfather says, in the old days,**

1. elephants were able to fly in the sky, like clouds. They used to fly behind clouds and frighten them. People used to look up at the sky in wonder.
2. because there was no electricity, he used to get up with the Sun and he used to go to bed with the Sun, like the birds.
3. like the owl, he was able to see quite well in the dark. He was able to tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps.

**Ans.**

1. Elephants could fly in the sky, like clouds. They could also change their shapes. They would fly behind clouds and frighten them. People would look up at the sky in wonder.
2. Because there was no electricity, he would get up with the sun and he would go to bed with the Sun, like the birds.
3. Like the owl, he could see quite well in the dark. He could tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps.



**Speaking and Reading**

**Look at these sentences.**

- **The tree was older than grandfather.**

- **Grandfather was 65 years old.**

How old was the tree? Can you guess?

- **The tree was as old as Dehra Dun itself.**

Suppose Dehra Dun is 300 years old. How old is the tree?

When two things are the same in some way, we use as ...as.

Here is another set of examples.

- Mr Sinha is 160 cm tall.
  - Mr Gupta is 160 cm tall.
  - Mrs Gupta is 160 cm tall.
- Mrs Gupta is as tall as Mr Sinha.

Use the words in the box to speak about the people and the things below, using as ... as or -er than.

tall-taller	cold-colder	hot-hotter	strong-stronger	short-shorter
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(Notice that in the word 'hot'. The letter 't' is double when - er is added)

## 1. Heights



Zeba (155cm)    Ruby (150 cm)    Rani (155 cm)

- Zeba is all tall as Rani.
- Zeba is taller than Ruby.
- Rani is taller than Ruby.
- Ruby is shorter then Zebra as well as Rani.

## 2. Weight Lifters



Vijay (50 kg)    Akshay (50kg)    Anwar (65 kg)



- **Vijay is as strong as Akshay.**
- **Anwar is stronger than Vijay as well as Akshay.**
- **Neither Akshay nor Vijay is so strong as Anwar.**

### 3. City Temperatures



Shimla (6°)



Gangtok (6°)



Srinagar (2°)

- **Shimla is as cold as Gangtok.**
- **Srinagar is colder than Shimla as well as Gangtok.**
- **Shimla is not colder than Srinagar.**

### 4. Lengths



Romi's pencil

(3 inches long)



Mona's pencil

(5 inches long)



Raja's pencil

(3 inches long)

- **Romi's pencil is as long as Raja's pencil.**
- **Mona's pencil is longer than Raja's pencil.**
- **Romi's pencil is shorter than Mona's pencil.**

### 5. City Temperatures



Delhi(43°)



Chennai (39°)



Nagpur (43°)

- **Delhi is as hot as Nagpur.**

- Delhi is hotter than Chennai.
- Chennai is not as hot as either Delhi or Nagpur.

## Writing

### 'My Favourite Place'

Read again the paragraphs of the story in which the author describes the banyan tree and what he used to do there. Is there a place in your house or in your grandparents' or uncles' or aunts' houses that you specially like? Write a short paragraph about it, saying

- Where it is?
- What you do there?
- Why you like it?

You may instead write about a place you dislike or are afraid of.

**My Favourite place** I have an uncle in Mumbai. I visit him with my family generally in vacations. He is a painter and has a big room where all his paintings are kept. His colours and brushes are kept in the room. He spent long hours in his room, watching and admiring his paintings. Sometimes, I also try to draw some sketches. I like this place because I like drawing and painting. I have requested him to teach me this art.

## Chapter Practice

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

#### 1. Who was the author's friend?

Author's first friend was a small grey squirrel. At first, it disliked the author invading its privacy.

#### 2. Name some books which made up the author's library?

Tressure island, Huckleberry Finn and the story of Dr Dolittle were some of the books that made up the author's banyan tree library.

**3. Who were unaware of the author's presence on the tree?**

The snake and the mongoose were unaware of the author's presence on the tree.

**4. Why did the snake try to mesmerise the mongoose?**

The snake tried to mesmerise the mongoose in order to persuade him, making a false move.

**5. What did the author like to do apart from reading?**

When the author did not feel like reading, he used to look down through the leaves at the world below.

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**Short Answer Type Questions**

**1. How did the squirrel become friendly with the author?**

The young squirrel became friendly when it found that the author did not arm himself with a catapult or an air gun. The author did not want to harm it. The author brought him pieces of cake and biscuit.

**2. How did the crow die in the fight between the cobra and the mongoose?**

The crow and the myna tried to interfere in the fight. They dived at the cobra and missed their mark. The cobra struck the crow with a great force. The crow flung nearly 20 ft across the garden and died.

**3. Do you think the myna behaved in a clever way? Give reason to support your answer.**

Yes, the myna behaved in a clever way. It always reached a safer place after diving at the cobra.

The crow lost its life behaving in a foolish way, but the myna survived. It later wisely decided not to interfere in their fight.

## Long Answer Type Questions

### 1. How did the mongoose manage to kill the snake?

Though, both the cobra and the mongoose were champions, the mongoose behaved in a clever way. The mongooses are superb and aggressive fighters. The cobra tried to mesmerise the mongoose, but he knew the power of his opponent's glassy eyes.

The mongoose fixed his gaze at a point below the cobra's hood and opened the attack. He was clever enough to make pretended move.

He defended himself well, biting the snake. The cobra coiled itself about the mongoose, but was not successful. The cobra could not struggle more and died at the end.

### 2. Describe the garden where the author used to spend his afternoon.

The garden has a magnificent old banyan tree. The tree was older than the house. It was as old as Dehra Dun.

Its branches were spread everywhere. The author used to hide in its branches and spy on the world below.

It was home to squirrels, snails and butterflies. During spring season, the tree was full of small red figs and birds such as bulbul, parrots, myna and crows would flock into its branches. The tree was the noisiest place in the garden.

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## Value Based Questions

### Why one should never underestimate the power of one's opponent? Give reasons.

One should never underestimate the power of one's opponent because the person develops overconfidence which leads to failure. In the story 'The Banyan Tree', the cobra knew that the grey mongooses were superb fighters and clever too.

But the cobra made wrong decisions, fell in the mongoose's trap and died at the end. Instead of giving full attention to the mongoose, the cobra focused on killing the crow and the myna. The cobra killed the crow, but could not save itself.

## Extract Based Questions

### Extracts 1

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

My first friend was a small grey squirrel. Arching his back and sniffing into the air, he seemed at first to resent my invasion of his privacy.

But when he found that I did not arm myself with catapult or air gun, he became friendly and when I started bringing him pieces of cake and biscuit he grew quite bold and was soon taking morsel from hand. Before long, he was delving into my pockets and helping himself to whatever he could find. He was a very young squirrel and his friends and relatives probably thought him foolish and headstrong for trusting a human.

**1. What did the author bring for the squirrel?**

The author brought pieces of cake and biscuit for the squirrel and he grew quite bold.

**2. What happened when the squirrel became bold?**

The squirrel became bold and started taking morsels from the author's hand. The squirrel began searching food into the author's pocket.

**3. Do you think the squirrel liked the author at first?**

No, the squirrel did not like the author first and resented the author's invasion of his privacy.

**4. Give the antonym for the word 'foolish'.**

- a) Wise                      b) Silly                      c) Stupid                      d) I diot  
a) Wise

**5. Who was the author's first friend?**

- a) Cobra                      b) Mongoose                      c) Myna                      d) Squirrel  
d) Squirrel

**6. Find synonym for the word 'privacy'**

- a) Content                      b) Seclusion                      c) Persuade                      d) Battle  
b) Seclusion

**Extracts 2**

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

In a clearing beneath the banyan tree, in bright sunshine, they came face-to-face.

The cobra knew only too well that the grey mongoose, 3 ft long, was a superb fighter, clever and aggressive. But the cobra, too, was a skilful and experienced fighter.

He could move swiftly and strike with the speed of light, and the sacs behind his long sharp fangs were full of deadly poison. It was too to be a battle of champions.

**1. What kind of skills a mongoose possesses?**

Mongoose are superb fighter, clever and aggressive.

**2. Write one feature of a cobra?**

A cobra is a skilful and experienced fighter. The sacs behind his long fangs are full of deadly poison.

**3. Which fight was the battle of champions?**

The fight between the cobra and the mongoose was the battle of the champion.

**4. Write synonym for the word 'poison'.**

a) Toxin                      b) Gaze                      c) Tonic                      d) Medicine

a) Toxin

**5. Who came face-to-face beneath the banyan tree?**

a) Myna and crow      b) Author and squirrel      c) Crow and cobra      d) Cobra and mongoose

d) Cobra and mongoose

**6. Find antonym for the word 'experienced'**

a) Skill                      b) Clever                      c) Inexperienced      d) Moment

c) Inexperienced