

Grade VII

Lesson 8. Meadow Surprises

POETRY

SOUL OF THE POEM

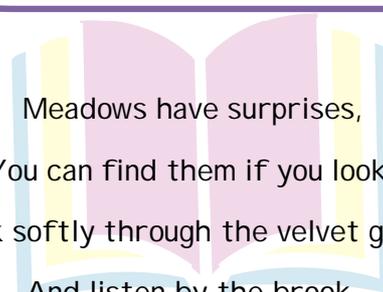
The meadow offers several surprises to the one who has an eager eye to look at the meadow. Walking on the soft velvety grass, the sound of the brook, a butterfly sipping nectar from the flowers, all such sights give immense pleasure. These sights are no less than the nature's surprise gift.

Walking further on, one may find a rabbit hidden in the grass. One may not be able to see it instantly, but soon it would hop in front of you because it would be scared. A dandelion that was golden a couple of days ago would have also bloomed.

One could find several houses in the meadows. There would be burrows in the ground, nests beneath the tall grasses, mounds for ants and so on. For every person there would be some or the other surprise.

STANZAWISE EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

Stanza 1



Meadows have surprises,
You can find them if you look;
Walk softly through the velvet grass,
And listen by the brook.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet notes that a meadow has several surprises.

Explanation If one pays attention, a meadow has several surprises to offer. It is a great pleasure to walk through the velvety soft grass and hear the sound of the brook.

Stanza 2

You may see a butterfly
Rest upon a buttercup
And unfold its drinking straws
To sip the nectar up.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet describes a beautiful sight one may encounter in the meadows.

Explanation In the meadows, it is possible to come across a butterfly comfortably placed upon her buttercup or flowers full of nectar. It would seem as if the butterfly is sipping nectar from the buds and flowers with the help of a drinking straw.

Stanza 3

You may scare a rabbit
Who is sitting very still;
Though at first you may not see him,
When he hops you will.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet describes yet another beautiful sight.

Explanation Walking on the soft grass, one may not be immediately able to see the rabbit hiding there. The rabbit might get frightened by our footsteps and would hop out of the grass. That indeed is a sight worth watching.

Stanza 4

A dandelion whose fuzzy head
Was golden days ago
Has turned to airy parachutes
That flutter when you blow.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet describes the sight of buds transforming into flowers.

Explanation Dandelions or bright yellow flowers, that appeared golden several days ago have bloomed and flutter as you go near and blow at them.

Stanza 5

Explore the meadow houses,
The burrows in the grounds,
A nest beneath tall grasses,
The ant's amazing mound.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet describes certain houses that are to be seen in the meadows.

Explanation If one explores the meadows, one comes across various houses. There are burrows in the ground meant for smaller animals. Some nests are found beneath the tall grass and mounds for the ants are also there.

Stanza 6

Oh! Meadows have surprises
And many things to tell;
You may discover these yourself,
If you look and listen well.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Lois Brandt Phillips' poem, 'Meadow Surprises.'

Context The poet reiterates the fact that a meadow has several surprises.

Explanation If one is able to pay a little attention, look and listen well, one may find several beautiful surprises in the meadows.

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1. Read the lines in which the following phrases occur. Then discuss with your partner the meaning of each phrase in its context.

- (i) Velvet grass (ii) drinking straws (iii) meadow houses
(iv) amazing mound (v) fuzzy head

- (i) The velvet grass means soft grass that almost feels like fur or velvet.
- (ii) Drinking straws mean that it appears as if the butterflies are sipping nectar from the flowers with the straws.
- (iii) Meadow houses are a reference to several houses which inhabit the insects, birds and animals that live in the meadows. Such as burrows, nests and mounds.
- (iv) The amazing mound is a reference to the mound created by the ants as their dwelling place.
- (v) Fuzzy head refers to the heads of the bright yellow flowers which have a beautiful texture.

2. (i) Which line in the poem suggests that you need a keen eye and a sharp ear to enjoy a meadow? Read aloud the stanza that contains this line.

"You may discover these yourself, If you look and listen well."

(ii) Find pictures of the kinds of birds, insects and scenes mentioned in the poem.

Do it yourself.

3. Watch a tree or a plant, or walk across a field or park at the same time everyday for a week. Keep a diary of what you see and hear. At the end of the week, write a short paragraph or a poem about your experiences. Put your writing up on the class bulletin board.

During the summers, I observed the holy Basil plant placed in the courtyard dying, due to lack of water.

So, I decided to water it regularly. I realised that the first few days, there was hardly any change in the plant. On the fourth day, tiny leaves emerged on its branches. Soon, those tiny leaves grew into full leaves and the entire plant seemed to have bloomed fully.

Chapter Practice

Very short answer type questions

1. What kind of surprise could be found while walking on the grass?

Walking on the velvety soft grass, one derives immense pleasure.

2. Why is one unable to see a rabbit initially?

One is unable to spot a rabbit in the grass because it is sitting very still. Only when it hops, is one able to see it.

3. What is the butterfly busy doing?

Butterfly seems to be busy in sucking nectar from the flowers. It appears as if the butterfly uses a drinking straw to do so.

Short answer type questions

1. Which all houses are characterised by the term 'meadow houses'?

Burrows in the ground meant for smaller animals, nests beneath the tall grass for birds and mounds for ants are the various houses that are characterised by the term, 'meadow houses.' While exploring the meadows one can see all of these.

2. Describe the various sights that one comes across in the meadows.

In the meadows, one comes across various beautiful sights. One is able to see butterflies sipping nectar from the flowers.

One encounters a rabbit that suddenly hops in from of you, one is able to see dandelions transform from buds to flowers and seek the pleasure of seeing them flutter. Only in the meadows is it possible to see burrows, mounds, nests all placed nearly in the same area.

The feeling of walking through the soft velvet like grass can only be understood by those who have been to the meadows.

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

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

Meadows have surprises,
You can find them if you look;
Walk softly through the velvet grass,
And listen by the brook.
You may see a butterfly
Rest upon a buttercup
And unfold its drinking straws
To sip the nectar up.

1. What surprises do the meadows have to offer you?

Meadows have too many surprises offer in the form of pleasure of the sounds of brook and feeling of soft velvety grass.

2. Why is it a great pleasure to walk through the meadows?

It is a great pleasure to walk through the meadows because its grass is as soft as velvet that gives you a pleasant walk.

3. What does the poet call 'buttercup' as? why?

The poet figuratively uses the word 'buttercup' for flowers and buds. The poet calls them so because they offer a lot of sweet nectar to the butterflies, to sip.

4. What must have been called as the 'drinking straws' by the poet?

- (a) Plastic pipes to drink juices
- (b) Twigs of the trees in bushes
- (c) Proboscis of the insects
- (d) The straw that the poet carrier with himself to drink river water.
- (c) Proboscis of the insects.

5. Which word in the poem is a synonym of 'sup' or 'drink with mouthfuls'?

- (a) Sip
- (b) Unfold
- (c) Suck
- (d) Brook
- (a) Sip

6. Which is the word in the extract that means 'a liquid sweet juice'?

- (a) Velvet (b) Meadow (c) Brook (d) Nectar
(d) Nectar

Extract 2

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

Explore the meadow houses,
The burrows in the grounds,
A nest beneath tall grasses,
The ant's amazing mound.
Oh! Meadows have surprises
And many things to tell;
You may discover these yourself,
If you look and listen well.

1. What does the poet refer to 'meadow houses'?

The houses of birds i.e. nests beneath the tall grass, the dwellings of rabbits, i.e. holes in the ground and mounds for the ants are called as 'meadow houses' by the poet.

2. What is amazing about the mounds of the ants?

The mounds of the ants are made of such a soft soil as is extremely difficult to pile the way the ants do. They work very diligently to create their house.

3. Which all surprises must the poet be talking about in these stanzas?

The poet talks about the surprises of the beauty of nature, like amazing chirping sounds of birds and humming sounds of bees and insects. He talks about the soft velvety grass and the beautiful greenery all around.

4. Who can feel the delight of the surprises that meadows offer?

- (a) A passive passerby.
(b) An eager passer-by with his eyes and ears wide open.
(c) A person who takes photographs of it.
(d) A hunter.

(b) An eager passerby with his eyes and ears wide open.

5. Which word in the extract means, 'house'?

- (a) Mounds (b) Meadows (c) Nests (d) Burrows
(d) Burrows

6. Which word is the opposite of 'badly'?

- (a) Look (b) Many (c) Well (d) Amazing
(c) Well



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