



Grade IX

Lesson 8. On Killing a Tree

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Poetry

Soul of the poem

It is not easy to kill a deep-rooted tree. It takes much time to kill it. A tree is too strong to be killed by a simple attack of a knife. It has grown slowly consuming the earth, feeding upon its crust, absorbing years of sunlight. The strength it has stored through a long period of hard work and patience, cannot be destroyed in one go.

When a tree is chopped, the barks bleed but soon they heal up and expand again to their former size. If one wants to kill a tree, it has to be pulled out of the anchoring earths. Its most sensitive part, i.e. the root, has to be exposed to the sun and air. Once it is done, the tree is killed.

NCERT Questions

Thinking About the Poem

I. 1. Can a "simple jab of the knife" kill a tree? Why not?

No, a simple jab of the knife cannot kill a tree. It is firmly held by the earth for so many years and its roots are safe. The tree is too strong to be killed by a simple jab of the knife.

2. How has the tree grown to its full size? List the words suggestive of its life and activity.

The tree has grown to its full size by consuming the earth, feeding upon its crust, absorbing years of light, air and water. 'Consuming', 'rising', 'feeding' and 'absorbing' are the words that suggest its life and activity.





3. What is the meaning of “bleeding bark”? What makes it bleed?

'Bleeding bark' suggests the wound on the tree that is caused by a blow of knife. When the branches of a tree are chopped off, the tree bleeds (an oozy substance comes out). It expresses the pain of the tree.

4. The poet says “No” in the beginning of the third stanza. What does he mean by this?

The poet says 'No' in the beginning of the third stanza suggesting that a simple jab of knife will not kill a tree. It has to be uprooted. A tree is so strong that it cannot be killed unless it is uprooted.

5. What is the meaning of “anchoring earth” and “earth cave”?

'Anchoring earth' implies that the trees are held secure with the help of the roots in the earth. So long as the roots are firmly held by the earth, the tree is safe and cannot be killed by a simple jab of a knife.

'Earth-cave' suggests the space created in the earth by uprooting a tree. When the roots are pulled out of the earth, the cave where the roots were hidden, is visible.

6. What does he mean by “the strength of the tree exposed”?

The strength of the tree lies in its roots, which the poet asks to snap out in order to kill the tree. Thus, the phrase “the strength of the tree exposes” refers to the roots of the tree being exposed to sunlight and air.

7. What finally kills the tree?

The tree is finally killed by the uprooting of its roots. When the roots, which had anchored it lying hidden in the earth for years, were dug out, the tree's strength was exposed and this led to the death of the tree. It dried up after it had been uprooted.

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Solved question Bank

Reference-to-Context Questions

Q. Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. It takes much time to kill a tree,

Not a simple jab of the knife

Will do it. It has grown

Slowly consuming the earth,

Rising out of it, feeding

Upon its crust, absorbing

Years of sunlight, air, water,

And out of its leprous hide

Sprouting leaves.

a. A sharp blow of _____ will not kill a tree.

Knife

b. 'It' in the above lines refers to _____.

A tree

c. A tree grows gradually taking nutrition from the soil.

True/False

True

d. The word 'leprous' is relating to the disease _____.

'Leprosy'

2. So hack and chop

But this alone wont do it.

Not so much pain will do it.

The bleeding bark will heal

And from close to the ground

Will rise curled green twigs,

Miniature boughs

Which if unchecked will expand again

To former size.



a. Humans cut and _____ the bark of trees into many pieces.

Chop

b. The barks that are cut will bleed and soon _____.

Heal up

c. The above lines mean that the tree will survive even after the brutal attack by man, and its branches will expand again True/False

True

d. _____ in the above lines means 'something very small'.

'Miniature'

3. No,

The root is to be pulled out -

Out of the anchoring earth:

It is to be roped, tied,

And pulled out - snapped out

Or pulled out entirely,

Out from the earth-cave,

And the strength of the tree exposed

The source, white and wet,

The most sensitive hidden

For years inside the earth.

a. In order to kill a tree, it has to be _____.

Pulled out/uprooted

b. The _____ are the most sensitive and hidden part of the tree.

Roots

c. The colour of roots of the trees is dark brown. True/False

False

d. 'Anchoring earth' in the above stanza implies that the _____ holds the _____ of the trees.

'earth; roots'

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is the effect of hacking and chopping on a tree?

A tree cannot be killed by a simple knife attack. Hacking and chopping of a tree make the bark bleed. It is soon healed and then it grows to its former size. It cannot be killed by these actions alone.

2. What happens to the tree after its bark will heal?

The wounds of the tree get healed. New green twigs rise from close to the ground. The small boughs will grow to their former size. And the tree is again alive. This is the way of the nature.

3. How do the roots look like when these are pulled out?

The real strength of the tree lies in its roots. The roots are the most sensitive part of the tree. When these are pulled out, they are white and wet. But soon, these start to wither and become dried.

4. "Consuming the earth, rising out of it." Explain.

The poet conveys that a tree grows stronger in the earth. It feeds on the earth rising out of it. It gets its strength from it. It is not easy to kill the tree by a simple jab of the knife. It is securely attached in the soil.

5. "So hack and chop. But this alone won't do it." What does hack and chop do to a tree?

The poet says that it is not an easy task to kill a tree. A simple jab of the knife will not do any harm. It does not cause much pain to it. It only wounds the bark and does not kill the tree. It will grow again.

6. "Which, if unchecked, will expand again to former size". What will expand to its former size?

The poet says that chopping of a tree does not kill it. It only bleeds the branches. They soon heal up and rise again. If the miniature boughs are left unchecked, they soon expand and become a huge tree.



7. What are the two important stages for killing a tree?

There are two stages of killing tree. First, the tree should be pulled out entirely along with its roots. Its roots are to be exposed to the sun and the air. Secondly, the roots are to be scorched in the sun. When the roots are scorched, these turn brown, hard and withered. The tree is finally killed.

8. How does the poet create the feelings of sadness in the poem 'On Killing A Tree'?

The poet creates the feeling of sadness by using words like killing, jabbing, bleeding, uprooting, etc. The 'bleeding bark' conveys the pain of a tree. 'No so much pain will do it', 'the bleeding bark will heal' are the phrases that create the feeling of sadness among the readers.

9. What does the killing of a tree symbolize?

The killing of a tree symbolizes the killing of a habit. Like a tree, habit grows stronger with the passing years. It can't be given up in one stroke. It takes much time to give up a habit. It has to be given up with strong determination.

10. "The strength of the tree exposes." Explain.

Roots are the strength of the tree. So long as the roots are safe, the tree is safe. It cannot be killed. Once the roots are pulled out and exposed to the sun and the air, they wither and the tree is finally killed.

11. 'And then it is done,' what does this mean?

The tree is killed by uprooting. Its roots have to be pulled out of the earth and exposed to the sun and the air. The roots get twisted and wither in the scorching heat. It finally kills the tree. It means if we find the core of the problem, we may be able to solve it.

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