

A WISE GRANDMOTHER

Session - 1**PRE-READING**

- Perhaps all of you know what a riddle is.
It is not only interesting but also amusing to solve a riddle. Here are some riddles. Try to solve them.
- I am once in tea,
Twice in coffee,
But not in sugar.
Who am I ?
 - I have a crown
But I am not a king,
I wake up early in the morning
But I am not a watchman.
Who am I ?
- Now let's try another :
"How can you make a rope of ashes ?"
Not easy to answer ? Don't worry.
Let's read a story and get the answer.



Text

• **SGP-1**

- Read paragraphs 1 - 4 silently and answer the questions that follow.

1. In the good old days in Japan, there lived a young farmer with his old grandmother. Taro, the young farmer, loved his grandmother very much. Like the other farmers in the village, Taro too grew his own rice, wheat and vegetables, and lived in peace and happiness. But things don't go the same way always. Once there was no rainfall. A drought came and dried the fields and wells. Slowly food became scarce. The people feared that within a few days there would be no food at all.
2. The headman of the village was very much worried. "We must think of some ways to solve this problem", he told in a meeting of the villagers. "Each one must have some food," said one farmer, "but nothing can be grown without water".
3. "I know. Now the only solution is to move away from our village to the nearby mountainside. Let the young people stay here as they are strong and can work hard to improve the situation". After a moment's silence, the headman continued, "All the old people above sixty should leave and go to the mountain village where it would be easier to get food".
4. All the families said a sad farewell to their dear old ones who left for the mountain village. But Taro could not bear the parting because of his deep attachment to his dear grandmother. So he quietly took her to an underground room at the back of the courtyard. He supplied her food and looked after all her needs there.

• **Comprehension Questions :**

1. Who was Taro? Who lived with him ?
2. What kind of life did Taro live ?
3. What troubles came to the villagers ?
4. Who were forced to leave the village ? Why ?
5. Who stayed back in the village ? Why ?
6. Was the village headman's decision right ?

7. How did the young people feel when they said goodbye to their old parents and grandparents ?
8. How would you feel if you were the young villagers ?
9. Why did Taro not send his grandma with other old people ?
10. What did he do with her ?

Session - 2

- **SGP-2**

- Read paragraphs 5-8 silently and answer the questions that follow.

5. But troubles followed one after the other. A few weeks later, the village headman had to put up a notice which was very important for everyone to read. It was from the warlord of the neighbouring town who threatened to take half the land if the villagers failed to answer the three riddles sent by him. But if they answered them correctly, he promised, he would give the villagers all the food they needed.
6. Taro quickly ran home to tell his grandmother all about the riddles as he hoped the village headman may allow her to stay in the village if she could tell the right answers. "Grandmother, listen, please listen carefully. Can you tell which part of a log is close to the top and which part is closer to the root?", Taro said. The old lady closed her eyes to think hard. She opened her eyes and said, "Float the log on water. The part closer to the root will sink but the part close to the top will remain on water".



7. Taro smiled with happiness. Feeling sure that the answer was correct, he asked the second riddle. "How can you make a rope of ashes, grandma?" The grandma's forehead creased as she closed her eyes to think hard. She opened her eyes and said, "Take a strong rope. Pour salt all over it. Light one end of the rope. It'll burn slowly inch by inch and what's left at the end is the coil of ashes". "Wow, that's great. You're superb, grandma! So now, can I ask the third riddle?", said Taro.
8. "Go ahead, let me see if I can answer", said the grandmother with a smile. "Well, well, this is the last one, grandma. How can you pass the silk thread through a hollow pipe which is crooked and curved?" The grandmother gave a hearty laugh. "That's easy. Take the thread, tie the leg of an ant to the thread, put some honey at one end of the pipe and push the ant from the other end. The ant is sure to crawl through for the honey at the other end, however crooked or curved the pipe may be".
"How wonderful ! That's like my grandma !"

- **Comprehension Questions:**

1. What did the warlord want the villagers to do ?
2. What was the warlord's first riddle ?
3. What was the grandmother's answer to it ?
4. What was the second riddle ?
5. What was the right answer to it ?
6. What was the third riddle ?
7. What was the answer ?
8. When the grandma listened to the riddles she kept her eyes closed for some time. Why ?
9. Will Taro take his grandma to the village headman to answer the warlord's riddles ?

Read the last part of the story and know.

Session - 3

- **SGP-3**

- Read paragraphs 9-11 silently and answer the questions that follow.

18. Taro was thrilled. He jumped and clapped with joy. "I'm lucky to have such a wise grandmother". And with these words, he rushed to the

village headman. He told him all the answers which the headman too said were correct. The headman was highly pleased to know how wise a young boy he had in his village.

"Oh, no, Sir. It isn't me who answered", said Taro humbly, bowing his head. "It is my grandmother who answered all of them".

10. The headman was full of remorse and shame for having thought all the old people useless. He thanked Taro and showered him with gifts. And in a gathering of all the people of the village, he gladly honoured the grandmother whose wisdom had saved the village.
11. The same day the village headman ordered all the old people to be brought back respectfully to the village where they lived in comfort and happiness. Then it rained and all the wells were filled. The land grew well and rich again, thanks to Taro's grandmother.

- **Comprehension Questions:**

1. The village headman was full of shame and repentance. Why ?
2. How did he deal with Taro and grandmother ?
3. Why did he reward them ?
4. What did he do with the old people ?
5. What happened when the old people returned to the village ?

Session - 4

III

POST-READING

1 Visual Memory Development Technique (VMDT) :

Whole Text : Taro's life, drought, old people driven out, warlords riddles answered, Taro and grandma, honoured, old men returned, happy and peaceful life restored

Part : Paragraph 2 - Taro with grandma in the village, no rainfall, old people moved to the nearby mountain

2

a.

Choose the correct alternatives and complete the sentences.

1. Taro lived happily with his _____.
A. father C. grandfather
B. mother D. grandmother
2. The village headman ordered the old people to move to the nearby _____.
A. hillside C. mountainside
B. lakeside D. roadside
3. Taro hid his grandmother in _____.
A. an old building C. a farm house
B. an underground room D. a grain store
4. The _____ set three riddles for the villagers.
A. warlord C. judge
B. landlord D. king
5. _____ answered all the riddles.
A. The village headman C. Taro
B. The old villagers D. Taro's grandmother

b.

A

SGP -1

SGP-2

SGP-3

B

* riddles and their answers

* grandmother was hidden

* drought in the village

* peace and happiness returned to life in the village

3 Listening :

Listen to your teacher reading out the paragraph.
Fill in the gaps while listening.

"That's easy. Take the thread, tie the _____ of an ant to the thread, put some _____ at one end of the _____ and push the ant from the other _____ . The ant is sure to _____ through the _____ at the other end, however _____ or _____ the pipe may be."

4 Speaking :

Here are some dialogues of the conversation between Taro and his grandmother. Practise them.

Steps for practice:

1. Rehearsal- teacher reads aloud, students listen. Teacher reads aloud and students repeat after him/her dialogue by dialogue.
2. Teacher vs Students
3. Students vs students (in two groups)
(They do this reading from the text.)

Taro : Grandma, listen. Please listen carefully.

Grandmother : Yes.

Taro : Can you please solve a riddle for me ?

Grandmother : Yes, with pleasure.

Taro : Can you tell which part of a log is close to the top and which part is closer to the root ?

Grandmother : (Closes her eyes for a moment and says) Float the log on water. The part closer to the root will sink, but the part closer to the top will float.

Taro : Thank You. A second question for you : How can you make a rope of ashes ?

Grandmother : Hum..m Well, take a strong rope. Pour salt all over the rope. Light one end of it. It'll burn

slowly inch by inch and what's left at the end is the coil of ashes.

Taro : Wow ! That's great ! You're superb, grandma !
So, can I ask my last question ?

Grandmother : Go ahead. Let me see if I can.

Session - 6

5 Vocabulary :

- a. Read the clues and find the words in the story. Figures in brackets indicate the paragraph numbers.

Clues

- a military ruler (5)
- bent and rounded (8)
- a difficult question (5)
- a period without rain (1)
- overjoyed (9)
- a feeling of guilty (10)
- not easily available (1)

Words in the text

- b. Riddle Game

Match the riddles with the correct pictures.

- (i) I am a bamboo with seven eyes.
- (ii) At night the king had cows many,
But in the morning there was not any.
- (iii) In the morning of life I go on four legs,
At mid-day I go on two,
In the evening I go on three legs,
Who am I ? Tell me true.
- (iv) I'm kicked right and left,
Air is my food,
Tell 'who I am if you are good.
- (v) I'm in your room,
You sit on me;
If you cut my head,
I'm on your head;
If you then cut my head,
I'm everywhere.



- c. Write some riddles. One is done for you. Ask your friends/class to solve your riddles.

(i) I have legs but cannot walk. (table/chair)

Session - 7

6 Writing :

Write answers to the following questions.

- i. Why did the crops fail ?

Ans: Once there was no _____. Ponds and _____ dried up. A drought _____. It dried _____. So the crops _____.

- ii. Why did the village headman send all the old people out of the village ?

Ans: _____

- iii. Why were the young people not sent out ?

Ans: _____

iv. What did Taro do with her grandmother ?

Ans: _____

v. What did the warlord want the villagers to do ?

Ans: _____

vi. What was the warlord's first riddle ?

Ans: _____

vii. What was the grandmother's answer to it ?

Ans: _____

viii. What was his second riddle ?

Ans: _____

ix. What was its answer ?

Ans: _____

x. What was his third riddle ?

Ans: _____

xi. What was its right answer ?

Ans: _____

xii. How did the village headman feel when he knew about the grandmother's role ?

Ans: _____

xiii. What did he do for Taro and his grandmother ?

Ans: _____

xiv. What happened after the old people returned ?

Ans: _____

Session - 8

7 Mental Talk :

- Old is gold.
- We owe a lot to our elders in the first place. So elderly people must be taken care of.

Tail-piece

It is the age-old experience and wisdom of our elderly people that counts much. You got to know it from the story "A Wise Grandmother". Let's read another story and see what it tells.

The Text

THE LAND WITHOUT OLD MEN

Long long ago, in one cold country, all the young people decided to kill all the old people. What was the use of their going on living with their white beard and all ? They had had their life, they had had their time, and that was that.

"But we need them", said a man who was not very old and not very young.

But the king was young. So giving the order did not trouble him. He declared that anyone who had reached the age of fifty was to be killed. Thus lots of wise old men were killed and lots of wisdom passed away with them.

Only one kind-hearted young man took pity on his old father. After all, he owed his life to his father. So, he hid him away in an underground room and took care of him.

Time passed and a terrible drought came. The young people tried to put up with all kinds of troubles, but more and more troubles followed. The snow melted and spring came. But they did not have a single grain of seed to put in the ground.

The old man in the cellar could see that his son was going about looking very unhappy all the time. One day he asked him, "Are you in trouble, my son? Tell your father all about it. He may be able to help you".



The son told him all about the troubles, from beginning to end. The old man thought for a while, and then said, "Don't tell anybody anything now. But when the last patches of snow melt on the fields, take your plough and plough up the lane in front of your house".

When the spring came and the snow melted, the son did as his old father had told him. And what did he see? There came a quick spring rain, and out of the ground there began to grow wheat and maize, oats and barley, and even beans and peas in some places.

It seemed so wonderful that the news of it spread up and down the country. It was a thing no one had ever heard of a man's growing crops without putting seeds in the ground.

The king got to hear of it too. He quickly ordered the boy to be brought before him.

"What did you do? How did you do it?" , the king started asking him questions at once. In fear, the boy told the truth.

"Bring me your father here," the king ordered. So the old man was brought before the king.

"What made you think there would be seeds in the doorway?"

"Well, Your Majesty, just think of how many seeds drop on the ground when people carry the corn home on their carts."

The wise old man was given a royal reward. He had saved the life of the whole nation.

And ever since then, they have respected all old people.

Word Note

- ashes : the powder that remains after a human body (something) is burnt, ପାଉଁଶ
- attachment : a feeling of love or strong liking for someone or something, ଗଭୀର ସଂପର୍କ
- courtyard : an open space inside or in front of a large house, ଅଗଣା
- creased : made lines by folding skin on forehead, କୁଞ୍ଚିତ, ଲୋଡ଼ାକୋଡ଼ା
- crooked : bent, ବଙ୍କା
- curved : bent round, ବୃତ୍ତ ପରି ବଙ୍କା

drought	: a long period of time when there is little or no rain, ମରୁଡ଼ି, ଅନାବୃଷ୍ଟି
farewell (opposite-welcome)	: saying goodbye, ବିଦାୟ
forehead	: the part of the face above the eyes and below the hair, କପାଳ
improve	: to become better than before, ଉନ୍ନତି କରିବା
promise	: to tell someone that you will definitely do or not do (something), ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରିବା
remorse	: a felling of guilty, ଅନୁତାପ
riddle	: puzzle, a question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, ଗୋଲକ ଧନ୍ଦା
scarce	: hard or difficult to find, not easily available, ଦୁର୍ଲ୍ଲଭ
thread	: a long thin piece of cotton, wool, silk etc. used for sewing, ସୂତା
threaten	: to tell someone that you will kill or hurt or trouble etc, ଧମକ ଦେବା
thrilled	: very excited and pleased, very much happy, ଉଲ୍ଲାସିତ, ବହୁତ ଖୁସି, ଅତି ଆନନ୍ଦିତ
troubles	: problems, difficulties, worries, ଅସୁବିଧା, ସମସ୍ୟା
warlord	: a military leader who controls a particular area or a country, ମିଳିତାରୀ ଶାସକ

Tail-piece

melt	: to make or become a liquid by heating, ତରଳିଯିବା
pass away	: die, ମରିବା
reward (opposite - punishment)	: something given in return of good work, ପୁରସ୍କାର
royal	: relating to a king or a queen or their family, ରାଜକୀୟ
terrible	: making frightened, unpleasant, ଭୟଙ୍କର
wisdom	: the quality of being wise, ଜ୍ଞାନ