

A Day in the Greens

...when Heidi heads out



CONNECT Have you ever visited a village or a small town where life is relaxed and different from city life? Tell the class about your experience.

REFLECT Life in a village is healthy but difficult. Do you agree with this statement? Why?

IMAGINE You had to live in a village for one week and you didn't have to go to school. How would you spend your time? Draw a picture of an activity that you would like to take up in the village.

BEFORE YOU READ

Johanna Spyri (1827–1901) was a Swiss writer famous for her children's story, *Heidi*, which was first published in two volumes in 1880 and 1881. She was born in Hirzel, Switzerland. Apart from her famous book *Heidi*, she wrote several other books on the living conditions of people in Switzerland. She particularly wrote about children who had lost their parents. Her stories give an insight into childish joys and sorrows.

A Day in the Greens is an extract taken from *Heidi*. Johanna Spyri wrote this novel in just four weeks! *Heidi* is about an orphan living in the beautiful Alps of Switzerland with her grandfather. She befriends Peter, a goatherd with whom she explores the many great sights of the Swiss Alps.



READ

Heidi was awakened early next morning by a loud whistle.

Opening her eyes, she saw her little bed, and the hay beside her, bathed in golden sunlight. For a short while, she did not know where she was, but when she heard her grandfather's deep voice outside, she recollected everything. She remembered how she had come up the mountain the day before and left old Ursula, her caretaker, who was always shivering with cold and sat near the stove all day. While Heidi lived with Ursula, she had always been obliged to remain inside the house, where the old woman could see her. Ursula being deaf, was afraid to let Heidi go outdoors, and the child had often **sulked** in the narrow room and had longed to run outside. She was, therefore, delighted to find herself in her new home and could hardly wait to see the goats again. Jumping out of bed, she put on her few things, and in a short time, went down the ladder and ran outside.

Peter was already there with his flock, waiting for Schwänli and Bärli, whom her grandfather was just bringing to join the other goats.

'Do you want to go with him to the pasture?' asked Grandfather.

'Yes,' cried Heidi, clapping her hands.

'Go now, and wash yourself first for the sun will laugh at you if he sees how dirty you are. Everything is ready there for you,' he added, pointing to a large tub of water that stood in the sun. Heidi did as she was told, and washed and rubbed herself till her cheeks were glowing. In the meanwhile, Grandfather called to Peter to come into the hut and bring his bag along. The boy followed the old man, who commanded him to open the bag in which he carried his **scanty** dinner. Grandfather put into the bag a piece of bread and a slice of cheese that were easily twice as large as those the boy had in the bag himself.

'The little bowl goes in, too,' said he, 'for the child does not know how to drink straight from the goat, the way you do. She is going to stay with you all day, therefore,

sulked: made a sorry face when upset

scanty: not enough



milk two bowls full for her dinner. Take care to see that she does not fall over the rocks! Do you hear?’

Just then, Heidi came running in. ‘Grandfather, can the sun still laugh at me?’ she asked. The child had rubbed herself so violently with the coarse towel, which the grandfather had put beside the tub, that her face, neck and arms were as red as a lobster. With a smile Grandfather said, ‘No, he can’t laugh anymore now; but when you come home tonight you must go into the tub like a fish. When one goes about like the goats, one gets dirty feet. Be off!’

Heidi and Peter started merrily up the Alps. A cloudless, deep-blue sky looked down on them. The wind had

Brainstorm

Where is Heidi going?



driven away every little cloud in the night. The fresh green mountainside was bathed in brilliant sunlight, and many blue and yellow flowers had opened up. Heidi was wild with joy and ran from side to side. In one place, she saw big patches of fine red primroses. On another spot, blue **gentian** sparkled in the grass, and everywhere, the golden

gentian: a plant with blue or violet flowers that grows in mountainous regions



rock-roses were nodding to her. In her **transport** at finding such treasures, Heidi even forgot Peter and his goats. She ran far ahead of him and then strayed away, off to one side. The sparkling flowers tempted her here and there. Picking whole bunches of them to take home with her, she put them all into her little apron.

Peter, whose round eyes could only move about slowly, had a hard time looking out for her. The goats were even worse, and only by shouting and whistling, especially by swinging his rod, could he drive them together.

‘Heidi, where are you now?’ he called quite angrily.

‘Here,’ it sounded from somewhere. Peter could not see her, for she was sitting on the ground behind a little mound, which was covered with **fragrant** flowers. The whole air was filled with their perfume, and the child drew it in, in long breaths.

‘Follow me now!’ Peter called out. ‘Grandfather has told me to look out for you, and you must not fall over the rocks.’

‘Where are the goats?’ asked Heidi without even stirring.

Brainstorm

What does Heidi find in the Alps?



‘Way up there, and we have still far to go. If you come quickly, we may see the eagle there and hear him shriek.’

That tempted Heidi, and she came running to Peter, with her apron full of flowers.

‘You have enough now,’ he declared. ‘If you pick them all today, there won’t be any left tomorrow.’ Heidi admitted that she had her apron already full. From now on, she stayed at Peter’s side. The goats, **scenting** the **pungent** herbs, also hurried up without delay.

Peter generally took his quarters for the day at the foot of a high cliff,

transport: (here) extreme happiness
fragrant: sweet smelling
scenting: smelling
pungent: having a sharp taste or smell





which seemed to reach far up into the sky. Overhanging rocks on one side made it dangerous, so Grandfather was wise to warn Peter.

breeze fanned her cheek and those big mountains about her made her feel happy as never before. She looked up at the mountain-tops till they all seemed to have faces, and soon they were familiar to her, like old friends. Suddenly, she heard a loud, sharp scream, and looking up she beheld the largest bird she had ever seen, flying above her. With outspread wings, he flew in large circles over Heidi's head.

'Wake up, Peter!' Heidi called. 'Look up, Peter, and see the eagle there!'

gusts: sudden rushes of wind
glistening: shining brilliantly; shimmering

After they had reached their destination, the boy took off his bag, putting it in a little hollow in the ground. The wind often blew in violent **gusts** up there, and Peter did not want to lose his precious load. Then he lay down in the sunny grass, for he was very tired.

Heidi, taking off her apron, rolled it tightly together and put it beside Peter's bag. Then, sitting down beside the boy, she looked about her. Far down she saw the **glistening** valley; a large field of snow rose high in front of her. Heidi sat a long time without stirring, with Peter asleep by her side and the goats climbing about between the bushes. A light



Peter was wide awake and then they both watched the bird breathlessly. It rose higher and higher into the skies till it disappeared at last behind the mountain-peak.

'Where has it gone?' Heidi asked.

'Home, to its nest,' was Peter's answer.

'Oh, does it really live way up there? How wonderful that must be! But tell me why does it scream so loud?' Heidi asked.

'Because it has to,' Peter replied.

'Oh, let's climb up there and see its nest!' pleaded Heidi, but Peter, expressing a decided **disapproval**

in his voice, answered, 'Oh dear, oh dear, not even goats could climb up there! Grandfather has told me not to let you fall down the rocks, so we can't go!'

Peter now began to call loudly and to whistle, and soon all the goats had assembled on the green field. Heidi ran into their midst, for she loved to see them leaping and playing about, while Peter, in the meantime, was preparing dinner for Heidi and himself.

disapproval: disagreement; not in favour of

CONSOLIDATE

A1. Fill in the blanks.

1. Peter was already there with his flock, waiting for _____ and _____, whom Heidi's Grandfather was just bringing to join the other goats.
2. Heidi and Peter started merrily up the _____.
3. After they had reached their destination, the boy took off his bag, putting it in a little _____ in the ground.
4. Heidi sat a long time without _____, with Peter asleep by her side and the goats climbing about between the bushes.
5. Peter now began to call loudly and to whistle, and soon all the goats had _____ on the green field.

